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ABSTRACT

The chapters in this collection provide the reader with a unified and systemic framework in which issues of excellence and equity are presented and discussed. The publication is structured to address critical issues and promising practices for linguistically and culturally diverse students in the areas of instruction, assessment, and parent involvement. The chapters are: (1) "School Reform in the Context of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Issues of Equity and Excellence" (Eugene Garcia); (2) "Attributes of Effective Schools and Classrooms for English Language Learners" (Diane August); (3) "Teaching beyond the Middle: Meeting the Needs of Underschooled and High-Achieving Immigrant Students" (JoAnn Crandall and Les Greenblatt); (4) "Focus on Assessment: Critical Issues Affecting the Educational Success of Language Minority Students" (Else Hamayan); (5) "Promising Practices for Language Minority Students: State and Local Perspectives" (Margo Gottlieb); (6) "Parental Involvement: The Need To Include Parents of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds" (Alberto Ochoa); and (7) "Building Effective Family/School Partnerships: Effective Practices in Arlington County Public Schools" (Theresa Bratt, Rosa Briceno, and Emma Violand-Sanchez). (Each chapter contains references.) (SLD)

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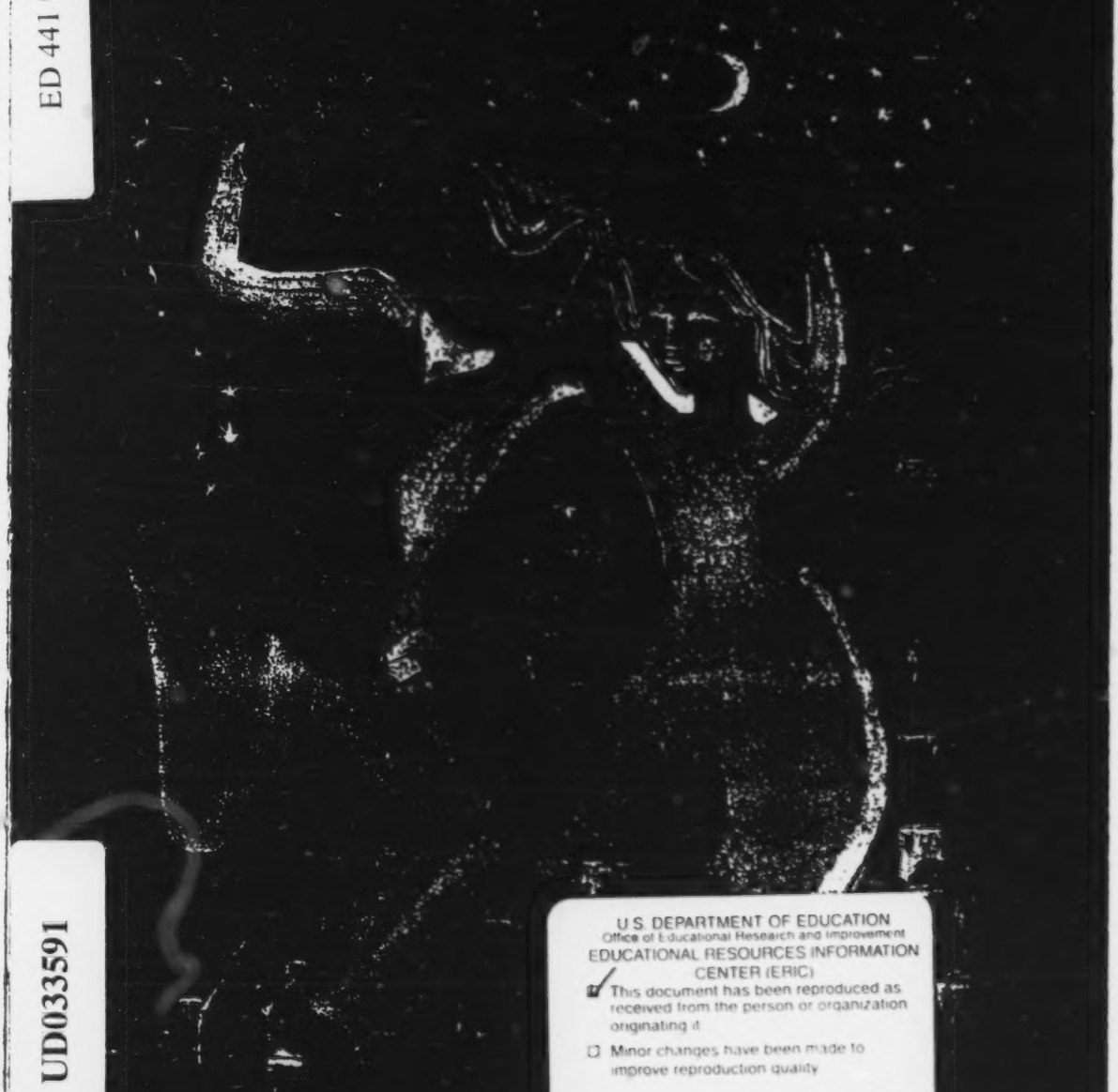
Excellence And Equity

For Language Minority Students:

Critical Issues and Promising Practices



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Excellence and Equity For Language Minority Students:

Critical Issues and Promising Practices

Edited by
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Dedication

The staff of the Mid-Atlantic Center dedicates this book to Byron Williams, our friend, colleague, and mentor.

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Preface

School reform initiatives often seem to require educators to address, what appear to be, conflicting needs. Emphasis is now being placed on systemic and whole school reform. However, with today's dramatic changes in demographic patterns, and the challenge to increase the achievement of all students, principals and teachers must pay attention to the specific needs of an increasingly diverse student body. This leads us to a variety of questions:

- Is it enough to simply identify "best practices" and "programs that work" for all students or must we take into account the specific needs and/or resources of culturally and linguistically diverse students?
- If we take into account student diversity, how does that inform our understanding and use of "best practices" and "model programs?"
- Are so-called "effective schools" frequently effective for only some students?
- If schools are effective for only some students, then how do we succeed in whole school or systemic reform in schools that serve a highly diverse student body?

Confronted with the challenge of providing high quality education to all its students, schools have adopted a variety of policies and practices. Typically, the schools that have focused their efforts mainly on the provision of equal access to educational offerings have paid little or no attention to the inclusion of issues related to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of their students. On the other hand, the schools that have focused their attention on the distinct characteristics of their students, have developed flexible structures in order to provide their diverse students with the tools they need to succeed academically. These schools have spent a good deal of time finding new paradigms: ways to support the achievement of all students to high standards; utilizing models and/or programs that have yielded promising results with particular populations; including diversity in all aspects of the curriculum; and providing a variety of these new approaches in integrated, systemic ways. We believe this last approach, although less common, is a more promising one.

Excellence and Equity: Critical Issues and Promising Practices, provides the reader with a unified and systemic framework in which issues of excellence and equity are presented and discussed. This publication is structured to address critical issues and promising practices for the linguistically and culturally diverse students in the areas of instruction, assessment and parental involvement. What follows is a summary of each of the articles included in this publication.

In the first chapter, *School Reform in the Context of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Issues of Equity and Excellence*, Eugene García provides a comprehensive framework in which he discusses new ways to understand and address diversity in schools. Recognizing and documenting the demographic challenges to educational reform, he talks about the historical educational responses to linguistic and cultural diversity and analyzes why traditional approaches such as *Americanization and Equal Educational Opportunity* have failed. In an effort to provide a more responsive approach, Dr. García proposes a set of questions that educational institutions need to ask in order to achieve improved teaching, improved learning and high performance in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity. He then goes beyond the questions and presents the main aspects of what he calls a *responsive pedagogy*. He describes a continuum of theoretical perspectives, which include the school/student cultural dissonance approaches on the one hand and the "what we know works" general approaches for teaching and learning on the other. Dr. García then discusses and synthesizes the main implications of these approaches and presents us with a series of principles. These principles are meant to serve as a powerful guide to policymakers, administrators and teachers in their efforts to provide effective and responsive schools for their growing diverse populations.

In the second chapter, *Attributes of Effective Schools and Classrooms for English-Language Learners*, Diane August provides a summary of attributes of effective schools and classrooms for English language learners. Based on the extensive report of the National Research Council, *Educating Language Minority Children* (1997), she identifies, describes and provides exemplars for most of these attributes. According to the author, although no single factor and/or factors can fully explain why English language learners perform poorly in school, it seems clear that, in the past, educational institutions have not succeeded in promoting the academic achievement of English language learners. She claims primarily two main reasons for this failure: a) the lack of generalized knowledge about what works for these students, and b) the lack of alignment between educational practices and student needs. This chapter provides a thorough analysis of what seems to work best with these students as well as examples of specific contexts in which the attributes seem to provide the most promising results.

In *Teaching Beyond the Middle: Meeting the Needs of Underschooled and High Achieving Immigrant Students*, JoAnn Crandall and Les Greenblatt share insights gained from four years of research and program implementation of Project WE TEACH (When Everyone Teaches, Everyone Achieves), a national demonstration project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Through student profiles, the authors describe the challenges and successes they encountered in the

implementation of the program, which served two groups of traditionally underserved students. These include those with limited prior education and literacy ("underschooled students") and those motivated and high-achieving students with great potential for college success. The authors also provide a summary of the key features of their program, including policy and program recommendations for model replication.

In Chapter Four, *Focus on Assessment: Critical Issues Affecting the Educational Success of Language Minority Students*, Else Hamayan discusses critical issues regarding the assessment of language minority students and provides a frame of reference for the development of policies that respond to their unique needs. Hamayan criticizes the use of single-reference standardized assessments in making high-stakes decisions on students' abilities and placements. While she opposes this approach for students in general, Hamayan is particularly against the use of this approach with students who come from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. The author claims that lack of full proficiency in the language of instruction, and sometimes in the language of the assessment, are confounding factors that interfere with obtaining valid and reliable information. Hamayan presents and discusses models of alternative assessment as alternatives and/or complements of standardized testing for assessing language minority students, including the Work Sampling System. In alignment with García's framework, Hamayan emphasizes the use of the student's cultural, socioeconomic and school contexts to better understand and assess, not just what the student has learned, but also how and what he/she has had the opportunity to learn.

In *Promising Assessment Practices for Language Minority Students: State and Local Perspectives*, Margo Gottlieb discusses two different models. First she describes three integrated ESL/bilingual assessments that are being implemented at the state level in Illinois. Second, she describes and discusses an innovative portfolio assessment that is being used in an urban, K-8 bilingual magnet school in Chicago.

Chapter Six, *Parental Involvement: The Need to Include Parents of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds*, written by Alberto Ochoa, speaks to the importance of involving language minority parents in school reform efforts. Ochoa argues that although there are many reasons why educators and administrators need to seek an open, participatory, and collaborative relationship with language minority parents, the most significant one is to counteract the present underachievement of language minority students. In his article, Ochoa discusses and analyzes the different types of parental involvement most currently used today. Using Paulo Freire's approach as one of his central

paradigms, Ochoa presents an alternative model in which parents are perceived as " agents of change" who "can transform their school communities and home contexts into settings of concern and support" for "developing the social and academic skills of all students." Demystifying the widely accepted notion that language minority parents in general, and Latino parents in particular, are not interested in participating in their children's education, Ochoa proposes new goals to empower both the parents and the school in a joint collaboration. Finally, the author highlights some of the tensions and positive changes that may arise from the process of empowering parents in schools.

In *Building Effective Family/School Partnerships: Effective Practices in Arlington County Public Schools*, Emma Violand-Sanchez, Rosa Briceño and Theresa Bratt describe parental involvement initiatives conducted in Arlington County at the district and school levels. Using a culturally-responsive model, based on the works by Brice Heath, Moll, and Epstein, among others, the authors describe their unique and comprehensive experiences with their growing culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center hopes that these articles will provide readers with a better knowledge and understanding of the issues covered as well as with methods, strategies and/or suggestions on how to address the complex and challenging needs of our growing culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

María del Rosario Basterra
Mid-Atlantic Equity Center
August 1998

Introduction Chapter 1

School Reform in the Context of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity: Issues of Equity and Excellence

Eugene E. García
University of California, Berkeley

Introduction

As a typical American teacher looks at the students in her classroom today, she sees a picture much different from the classroom of her childhood. Today, one of three children nationwide is from an ethnic or racial minority group; one of seven speaks a language other than English at home; and one of fifteen was born outside the United States. The linguistic and cultural diversity of America's school population has increased dramatically during the past decade, and it is expected to increase even more in the future. The concept of "minority" group will soon become obsolete since no one group will qualify as a maiority.

Educating children of immigrant and ethnic minority groups has now become a major challenge for school systems across the country. For too many culturally and linguistically diverse children, American education is not a successful experience. 10% of non-Hispanic White students leave school without a diploma. By contrast, 25% of African American students, 33% of Hispanic students, 50% of Native American students and 66% of immigrant students of all backgrounds drop out of school (García, 1994).

Confronted with these dismaying statistics, administrators, teachers, parents and policy makers urge one another to do something -- to change teaching methods, to adopt new curricula, and to allocate more funding. Such actions may be needed, but they will not be meaningful until we begin to think differently about the students themselves. In order to educate children whom we perceive to be different, we must first educate ourselves about who they are and what they need to succeed. Creating effective strategies for educating diverse students involves viewing them in ways that may contradict conventional notions.

During my recent assignment in Washington, D.C. as the Director of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs in the U.S. Department of Education, I attempted to draw on both my professional expertise as an educational researcher and my personal experience as the member of a large Mexican American family. The professional in me was -- and continues to be -- nurtured in some of the best educational institutions of this country. The private, personal part of me was -- and continues to be -- nurtured and formed in a large, rural, Mexican American family. All native Spanish speakers, my siblings and I were born in the United States, as were our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents before us. I find that bringing these *personas* (the Spanish term for "persons") together was not as difficult as I might have expected. I even came to conclude that this intersect was quite helpful to me, to my colleagues and to the wide variety of audiences that I interacted with in my national role. In fact, I found by bringing together these personas, I was able to communicate to individuals in ways that were not possible if I spoke only with one or with separate voices.

The present discussion is my attempt to put into writing these intersecting but distinct voices and to help further our understanding of life in a diverse society. As I do so, I will also emphasize the role of educational institutions which strive to serve a linguistically and culturally diverse population today and which will need to serve them better in the future. For there is no doubt that the historical pattern of the education of these populations in the United States has been a continuous story of underachievement.

It need not be that way in the future. Educational institutions today must and can address issues of both equity and excellence. We must go beyond educational endeavors aimed at providing underachieving students with equal educational opportunity. The challenge today is to make those opportunities produce excellence in academic outcomes. Our three decade effort in serving these students must evolve from seeking equality of educational opportunity to producing excellence in educational outcomes.

Two central propositions lie at the core of educational reform for our linguistically and culturally diverse students. They are:

To honor diversity is to honor the social complexity in which we live -- to give respect to the individual and to respect the place from which he or she comes.

To unify is absolutely necessary, but to insist upon it without embracing diversity is to destroy that which will allow us to unite--individual dignity.

Aligned with these two propositions and with the general tenets of standards-based educational reform unfolding in our schools, I will suggest that to move diverse students from the realm of educational failure to the realm of educational success, reformers must recognize the new theory, empirical research and instructional practice that have helped us to better serve these students. The present discussion will address needed reform activities that can move us from a concern for remedial and equal education to what I have termed the utilization of Responsive Pedagogy and the creation of Responsive High Performance Learning Communities.

The growing urgency to accomplish educational reform to meet a diverse student population's need for both equity and excellence is due, first, to the dramatic degree to which diversity is now a salient characteristic of American youth; second, to our educational system's history of response to diversity; and, third, to the theoretical and developmental advances of the recent past which now point the way to possible success for all. These three factors are discussed in the sections that follow.

The Demographic Challenge to Educational Reform

Nationwide, the total number of students identified as English Language Learners (ELL's -- formally identified in governments' census as Limited English Proficient) enrolled in schools has surpassed 3 million since 1993-94 (García, 1994). Three million, one hundred eighty-five thousand ELL students were enrolled during the 1994-95 school year. Total enrollment for 1994-95 was 47.746 million, thus 3.185 million ELL students represent 6.7% of total enrollment. The ELL enrollment for 1994-95 reflects an increase of 146,774 students, or 4%, over those enrolled in 1993-94. Since 1990-91, yearly increases in the number of ELL students averaged 8% annually, with the highest increase (16%) occurring between 1993-94 and 1994-95. Based on data collected by the U.S. Department of Education (which is not exhaustive since not all states are required to report such data), the estimated yearly enrollment of ELL students during the past five years was:

Total Number of ELL Enrolled in U.S. Schools (numbers in millions) By School Year

School Year	ELL Students	% Increase from Prior Year
1994-95	3.185	4.8%
1993-94	3.038	15.9%
1993-94	3.038	15.9%
1991-92	2.430	10.5%
1990-91	2.199	2.0%

Source: García, E. (1994). Addressing the challenges of diversity. In S. L. Kagan and B. Weissbourd (Eds.), *Putting families first* (pp. 243-275). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Where are ELL students enrolled?

ELL students are not distributed equally across the states. States with the largest numbers of ELL enrollments for 1994-95 are listed below.

ELL Enrollment by Selected State

State	ELL Enrollment	% of National ELL Enrollment
California	1,262,982	39.9%
Texas	457,437	14.5%
New York	236,356	7.5%
Florida	153,841	4.9%
Illinois	107,084	3.4%
Arizona	98,128	3.1%
New Mexico	84,457	2.7%
New Jersey	52,081	1.6%
Washington	51,598	1.6%
Total	2,503,964	79.0%

Source: García, E. (1994). Addressing the challenges of diversity. In S. L. Kagan and B. Weissbourd (Eds.), *Putting families first* (pp. 243-275). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Similarly, the unequal distribution of ELL enrollments exists even among these nine states which have the largest number of ELL enrollment nationwide.

Percent of Total Enrollment of ELL within Four Selected States

State	ELL Enrollment	% of Total Enrollment
California	1,262,982	21.3%
Texas	457,437	12.3%
Arizona	98,128	12.8%
Nevada	23,390	8.9%

Source: García, E. (1994). Addressing the challenges of diversity. In S. L. Kagan and B. Weissbourd (Eds.), *Putting families first* (pp. 243-275). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has projected that many of the states listed above will experience among the highest enrollment growths in the nation between 1995 and 2005:

- Projected enrollment growth for the South is 10.8%, with Texas to see a 12.4% increase and Florida a 10.1% increase in total enrollments.
- Projected enrollment growth for the West is 18.18% with California experiencing a 21.9% increase, New Mexico an 18.9% increase, Washington a 17.6% increase, Nevada a 17.1% increase, and Arizona a 15.8% increase.
- In regions projected to experience a smaller enrollment growth, the states with large numbers of ELL students have much larger enrollment growth rates. For example, the Northeast's enrollment is expected to increase by 5.6% yet New York's will increase by 6.0% and New Jersey's by 14.4%.

How Many School Districts Need Assistance To Address The Educational Needs of ELL Students?

For particular school districts, ELL students make up a significantly high percentage of the student population. Thus, the challenge to address the needs of ELL students is particularly urgent. However, the challenge is also widespread throughout the nation since 46.3% of schools report having ELL students. It is generally known that the many schools of the Southwestern states have high levels of ELL enrollments, yet a surprising percentage of schools in Southern states and in parts of New England also serve ELL students. The regional distribution of schools with ELL students indicates that ensuring a high quality education for language minority children is the responsibility of more than five or ten states -- and raising the issue should not be left to certain ethnic groups.

Schools with ELL Students, by Region

Region	Number	Percentage
Northeast	7,126	52.2%
Midwest	6,285	26.6%
South	11,733	44.4%
West	12,275	72.3%
Total	37,419	46.3%

Source: García, E. (1994). Addressing the challenges of diversity. In S. L. Kagan and B. Weissbourd (Eds.), *Putting families first* (pp. 243-275). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

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Schools in all regions of the nation are confronting the challenge of educating ELL students. Providing ELL students with equal access to quality education is a national issue which demands critical resources and serious attention.

Moreover, according to NCES data on school size, poverty, and ELL enrollments, the most difficult conditions converge on the same set of schools. The 100 districts with the largest number of poor children serve over 40% more children per school building than the nation's average. The nation's average number of students per school in public elementary and secondary schools was approximately 511 in 1993-94. In contrast, the corresponding average was 713 for the 100 districts with the largest number of poor children. Those 100 districts serve 40% more students than the national average of 511 students per school.

- Schools with 20% or more of their students receiving free or reduced-price lunch are twice as likely to have ELL students as are those schools that have fewer than 20%.

- Seven out of 10 schools with minority enrollments of 20% and above serve ELL students, while only 3 of 10 schools with less than 20% minority enrollment serve ELL students.

U.S. Educational Responses to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

During the last decades, research and practice in culture and education have ranged from a focus on "Americanization" (Gonzalez, 1990), to educational equity (Ramirez & Castaneda, 1974), and more recently to the "responsive" relevant instruction of children from diverse cultural and language groups (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; García, 1994). Many would argue that the education of culturally diverse populations continues to be driven by the goal of "Americanization," in spite of growing concern over the appropriateness of effectiveness of this approach. Other responses to diversity merit examination. A growing body of research and practice points to successful reform and provides a framework for valuing diversity and for establishing learning communities that optimally serve all students.

Americanization

Historically, "Americanization" has been a prime objective for educating culturally diverse children (Elam, 1972; Gonzalez, 1990). "Americanization" schooling practices have been adopted whenever the population of "different" students rose to significant numbers in a community. Special programs were established and applied to both children and adults in urban as well as in rural

schools and communities. The desired effect of "Americanizing" students was to socialize and acculturate the diverse community. In essence, it was thought, if schools could teach these students English and "American" values, their educational failure could be averted. Ironically, social economists have argued that this effort was actually coupled with systematic efforts to keep alive the disparate conditions between Anglos and "minority" populations. Indeed, more than anything else, past attempts at addressing the "Black, Hispanic, Indian, Asian, etc., educational problem" have in fact served to preserve the political and economic subordination of their communities (Spencer, 1988).

Coming from a sociological theory of assimilation, "Americanization" has traditionally been offered as a solution to the "problem" of immigrants and ethnicity in the modern industrialized United States. "Americanization" has intended to merge small ethnic and linguistically diverse communities into one dominant, institutional structure. Thomas and Park (1921) argued that the immigrants' "Old World" consciousness would eventually be overcome by "modern" American values.

Rather than presenting a detailed review of literature analyzing the history of immigrant populations in the United States, I will refer to the recent studies by Gonzalez (1990) and Spencer (1988).

Why European immigrants were easier to Americanize than other immigrants

Slaves and immigrants from Africa, Mexico, Puerto Rico and other Latin and Asian countries could not escape the *effects of the economic and political relationship between the United States -- an advanced industrialized nation -- and their own semi-industrialized, semi-feudal nations and territories.* Politically and economically, the United States exercised an increasingly disproportionate influence over these immigrants' nations or territories of origin. That unequal relationship led to a very constrained immigration pool from which -- in the main -- farm and low-skilled labor steadily migrated to the United States. Relationships within the United States strongly reflected the external relationship: that is, the relationship between nations/territories struggling to realize their interests against the nationalism of a growing world power. *Judgments of non-European persons, languages and cultures were colored here by objective international inequalities.* In contrast, none of the migrant-contributing European countries were in such an unequal relationship with the United States and so their national cultures tended to be judged here on a footing much more closely approaching equality.

"Americanization" - Transforming "Undesirable" Cultures

"Americanization" still seems to be the goal of many programs aimed at culturally diverse students (Rodriguez, 1989; Weis, 1988; Nieto, 1992). Unfortunately, the unspoken (and sometimes the spoken) goal of "Americanization" for diverse students unfortunately still is held to be the elimination, not only of linguistic and cultural differences but of an "undesirable" culture. "Americanization" programs are based on the assumption of a dynamic created by a monolithic, homogeneous, pre-modern culture (labeled ethnic) coming into contact with a monolithic, homogeneous, modern culture. The dominant community, enjoying greater wealth and privileges, claims its position by virtue of cultural superiority (Ogbu, 1987). In one way or another, nearly every culturally diverse child, whether born in the United States or elsewhere, is likely to be treated as a foreigner or an intruder. The Los Angeles school superintendent voiced a common complaint in a 1923 address to district principals:

> ***"We have the [Mexican] immigrants to live with, and if we Americanize them, we can live with them..."***

Even today the objective is to transform the diversity in our communities into a monolithic English-speaking and American-thinking -and-acting community.

The "Americanization" solution has not worked. Moreover, it depends on the flawed notion of group cultural deficiency. The "Americanization" solution presumes that culturally different children are as a group culturally flawed. To fix them individually, we must act on the individual as a member of a cultural group. The premise is that if we can change the values, language, etc. of the group, we will combat the educational underachievement of students in culturally and linguistically diverse groups.

Educational Equity

No one argues about the significance of education in this country. We are all convinced that an educated society can enhance individual well-being, raise the standard of living and maintain a democratic society (Dewey, 1921). Moreover, education is perceived as a vehicle for achieving the "American Dream."

Equal access to educational opportunities is a corollary to this society's value of education. In 1954, the landmark decision in the U.S. Supreme Court case with regard to Brown v. Board of Education, concluded that separate/segregated education for African Americans was inherently unequal to the education provided for White Americans. In essence, the Court argued that every effort must be made to address equal access to education regardless of race. This

decision was reinforced for Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women in the significant U.S. Congressional activity during the 1960-70's "War On Poverty" era. Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the major legislative piece, banned discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in any program receiving federal financial assistance (Title IX of that act addressed educational equity across gender). Not coincidentally, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 began to provide millions of federal dollars in assistance to state and local school systems. If school systems were to make use of federal funds, they were held accountable to the standard of non-discrimination.

This legislation banned recipients of federal resources from "restricting an individual in any way in the enjoyment of any advantage or privilege enjoyed by others receiving any service, financial aide or benefit under the (federally) funded program." Moreover, the recipient of federal funds was prohibited from utilizing criteria or methods which would hinder the objectives of the federally funded program with respect to individuals of a particular race, color or national origin. Other provisions of this legislation provided for a private cause of action (a lawsuit) against the federally funded institution to rectify issues of discrimination. Students and their parents could independently move the courts to seek relief and no longer needed to wait for the federal government to find programs out of compliance. A barrage of legal action aimed at addressing education inequities soon followed.

In addition to legal action, further administrative and legislative activity followed. In 1970, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare issued a memorandum, later referred to as the May 25 Memorandum, which clarified the 1964 Civil Rights Act with respect to non-English speaking students:

> Where an inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open instructional programs to these students.

The 1974 Equal Educational Opportunities and Transportation Act gave administrative protection for linguistically diverse students the force of federal law, making "the failure by an educational agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its educational programs" an unlawful denial of equal educational opportunities.

Equal Educational Benefits and the "Americanization" Movement

For over a decade, the equal educational opportunity approach to schooling the growing number of culturally diverse students pervaded our schools, and it continues to drive many educational initiatives. However, "Americanization," in its narrowness, has in many cases retarded or worked against the "Equal Educational Opportunity" laws and regulations, leaving culturally and linguistically diverse students trapped in the midst of two conflicting frameworks.

Educational Reform: Questions Related To Equity And Excellence

The discussion that follows focuses on what questions need to be asked in order to achieve improved teaching, improved learning and high performance in the context of cultural and linguistic diversity. Just as there are certain elements of school-wide reform and teaching practice that increase the chances for culturally and linguistically diverse students' academic success, the literature provides considerable guidance to particular questions that can serve as a starting point for developing useful school strategies.

August and Hakuta (1997) provide a comprehensive review of effective schools and classrooms which serve linguistically and culturally diverse populations -- and demonstrate high academic performance. Their review of some 33 studies identified the following attributes of success:

> a supportive school-wide climate, school leadership, a customized learning environment, articulation and coordination within and between schools, use of native language and culture in instruction, a balanced curriculum that includes both basic and higher-order skills, explicit skills instruction, opportunities for student-directed instruction, use of instructional strategies that enhance understanding, opportunities for practice, systematic student assessment, staff development, and home and parent involvement (August & Hakuta, 1997, p. 171).

The questions which follow draw on this research as well as the conceptual understanding of this paper. By answering these questions, an instructional program can be evaluated in terms of how well it can and does serve a diverse student population according to the standards set by the work of August and Hakuta.

Question #1
"How can language, culture and student diversity be incorporated into the instruction, curriculum and assessment practices?"

Literature on language acquisition and effective instruction for language minority students indicates that students are much more likely to be engaged learners in environments in which the curriculum and teaching approaches build on the diversity of the students and teachers (Wong-Fillmore, 1991; Pease-Alvarez, García, & Espinoza, 1991). Their engagement also depends on teachers who are familiar with -- and ideally, closely-connected to -- the students' home communities. To build an understanding of complex ideas and new concepts, students will need teachers who can develop practices that reflect or resemble the students' experiences (Pease-Alvarez et al., 1991).

In addition, interaction with other students and adults in the school community helps to develop appropriate social and communication skills, and contributes to the kind of "safe" environment where children learn best.

Finally, assessments of students' learning progress, of their conceptual development and of their skills acquisition need to be aligned with curricular and instructional goals and include all students. Assessments have to involve all of the school's students to truly gauge the quality of the learning environment. When linguistically and/or culturally diverse students are systematically left out of regular school-wide or classroom assessments, the results cannot reflect the learning that goes on in a school. More importantly, the areas which most need attention are likely not to be identified or noticed.

Question #2
"How do we educate teachers on diversity?"

Very closely-related to the issue of engaged student learning, is the issue of professional development aimed at effectiveness with culturally and linguistically diverse students. As noted above, teachers and other professionals who work with students of diverse backgrounds are called upon to bring many skills, strategies, and insights into their classrooms. A concern arises as to how their work approaches are developed and shared within (and beyond) the learning environment.

Question #3

"What is the school vision and mission(s)? How are issues of language, culture and diversity addressed in them and how are they articulated for/to teachers, students, district and school administrators and policy bodies, and parents?"

In addition to classroom teaching practices, school-wide practices and attitudes affect the academic success of diverse students. Schools should develop a vision that celebrates cultural diversity and seeks to optimize learning opportunities for all students (García, 1994; García & Gonzalez, 1995). Moreover, mission statements that are aligned with this vision are very important in guiding schools in ways that can make real the vision. Finally, we may ask the following:

Question #4

"How do power relationships in society and the education and local community get embedded in the school? What are the prevailing norms and underlying beliefs that shape student and teacher roles, expectations and standards? How do they change as schools create and implement new policies and practices aimed at developing responsive learning communities?"

Attention should be given to the relationships within the school community and the structures which promote participation by all sectors of that community and the community the school serves. Participation, however, is not enough. Attention needs to be paid to ensuring that inequities operating within and between these communities and their individual constituencies are not reified or replicated. Without attention to these issues, schools may end up supporting inequalities that exist within its own domains and in society.

These questions are meant to provide educators and policy makers with some of the key issues from which effective educational programs for culturally and linguistically diverse students may emerge. The following section provides an overview of what I call responsive pedagogy and highlights how this approach can effectively address the needs and resources of diverse populations.

A Responsive Pedagogy: Addressing Cultural Diversity Within Schooling Contexts of Excellence

This discussion is framed within a broad educationally relevant theoretical continuum. At one end of this continuum, from what might be called a "culture significance position," it is argued that addressing culturally diverse populations calls for a deeper understanding of the interaction between students' own cultures and the prevailing culture of the schools they attend (Cole, 1996; García, 1994). At the other end of our continuum the literature argues the importance of general principles of teaching (best practices) and learning which (within broad limits) are effective with all students (Bloom, 1984; Baden & Maehr, 1986; Rosenshine, 1986; Slavin, 1989; Walberg, 1986). To facilitate the discussion of how consideration of cultural diversity can be integrated into the development of a pedagogy and of practices that will improve the educational conditions under which diverse-culture students labor, Figure 1 illustrates the continuum of approaches that are suggested by the literature reviewed here. However, the "cultural dissonance" to "general principles" continuum need not be interpreted as a set of incompatible approaches to an understanding of the educational circumstances of culturally diverse students. Rather, my intention is to make evident that a wide variety of serious scholars have sought to understand and explain the conditions of culturally and linguistically diverse students as a necessary and fundamental step for understanding the challenges of educating them for success.

Figure 1: Addressing Cultural & Linguistic Diversity A Continuum of Theoretical Perspectives

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The Importance of School/Student Cultural Dissonance

A rich contribution of research suggests that the educational failure of "diverse" student populations is related to a culture clash between home and school. Evidence for such a position comes from Boykin (1986) for African American students, Brice Heath (1983) for poor white students, Wiesner, Gallimore, and Jordan (1988) for Hawaiian students, Vogt, Jordan and Tharp (1987) for Navaho students, García (1988, 1991) for Mexican American students and Rodriguez (1989) for Puerto Rican students. These researchers' findings show that diverse students do not succeed because the difference between school culture and home culture lead to an educationally harmful dissonance. An "Americanization" response to this evidence would place responsibility for resolving the culture dissonance on the students themselves by requiring them to adopt the school culture -- a prescription which past and present practice has shown to be disastrous.

A cultural pluralism perspective, on the other hand, requires schools to recognize their own responsibility for diverse students' educational success. The research cited is clear: when schools fail to attend to the distinctiveness of the contribution of culture, the educational endeavors for culturally distinct students is likely to fail. However, when schools value and legitimize the distinctiveness of the strengths, values and contributions of students' own diverse cultures, both individuals and the cultures in which the individuals reside receive educational attention. They have an opportunity to contribute to the learning environment. The challenge for educators, then, becomes one of identifying critical differences between and within ethnic minority groups, and between individuals within those groups. That information must then be used to make classroom practice more appropriate to the realities of diverse students and more responsive to their potential as contributors to their learning.

Beyond Cultural Dissonance: Socio-Political Factors

Also along our continuum are concepts which attempt to explain the underachievement of culturally and linguistically diverse students by going beyond the fact of student/school differences to examine how those differences are valued and used by the larger society to maintain social, economic and political inequalities. Paulo Freire (1970) has argued that education initiatives *on behalf of* a given class of people cannot succeed when the conditions of the larger society oppress them and deny them social status, economic benefits and political power. He and others (Cummins, 1986; Pearl, 1991)suggest that such social oppression taints schools' curriculum or pedagogy, making schools the reinforcers and legitimizers of the society's oppression. In this view, the goals of educational equity and educational achievement for the "underserved" can only

be achieved by a pedagogy of empowerment: one that seeks not to help culturally and linguistically diverse students escape society's oppression but instead seeks to help them equip themselves to end it. Bernstein (1971), Laosa (1982) and Wilson (1987) also examine the effects of socio-economic factors on the organization of schools and instruction. They suggest that the effect on cultural and linguistic minority groups of extensive exposure, over generations, to poverty and related socio-economic hardships undermines the teaching/learning process at home, in the community, and consequently in the schools. The result is disastrous, long-term educational failure and continued disruption of family and community.

In the view of Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986), this country's present social approach to several immigrant and minority populations relegates them to a layer of society whose members are not expected to excel academically or economically and are therefore treated as a "caste-like population." When society's low expectations for these populations are internalized over time by their members, the result is their academic underachievement and social withdrawal.

In addition to the sources indicated above, others, too, suggest that the vulnerability of culturally diverse students can best be understood in a context broad enough to include the conditions that society creates for students both inside and outside of schools. (For example, see Anyon, 1995; Bernstein, 1971; Cummins, 1979, 1986; Brice-Heath, 1986; Freire, 1970; Levin, 1988; Ogbu, 1987; Rose, 1995; Trueba, 1987; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988.) Their thoughtful and comprehensive view of the schooling process brings an understanding of the relationship between home and school, the psycho-socio-cultural incongruities that can exist between the two, and the effects on learning and achievement of the resulting dissonance (Cole, 1996). Taken together, their work sounds a clear and compelling warning that no real solution to achieving educational excellence for culturally diverse students is likely even if schools mark them for special treatment because of their cultural backgrounds but *fail to take into account the psychological effects of society's attitude toward those cultures.*

The Importance of General Principles for Teaching and Learning

At the other end of the "cultural dissonance" to "general principles" continuum is the view that if schools are to improve the educational achievement of the culturally diverse their instructional programs must implement appropriate general principles of teaching and learning.

From this perspective, responsibility for the underachievement of culturally diverse students must be shared, at least, by the school. The academic failure of

any student is perceived as resting on the failure of instructional personnel to implement what we know "works". Using the now common educational analytical tool known as meta-analysis, Walberg (1986) suggests that educational research synthesis has identified robust indicators of instructional conditions which have academically significant effects across various conditions and student groups. Other reviews (Baden & Maehr, 1986; Bloom, 1984; Slavin, 1989) have articulated this same position.

Implied in the "general principle" position is the premise that the educational failure of "diverse" populations can be eradicated by the systemic and effective implementation of these understood general principles of instruction which work with "all" students. In this vein, a number of specific instructional strategies including direct instruction (Rosenshine, 1986), tutoring (Bloom, 1984), frequent evaluation of academic progress (Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989) and cooperative learning (Slavin, 1989) have been particular candidates for the "what works" category.

A related view also assigns significant responsibility for students academic under achievement to the schools but emphasizes the important role of expectations. A "general principle" for teaching and learning, it is argued, is that high expectations should be held of all students. However, Snow (1990) has suggested that students, teachers and school professionals in general have low academic expectations of culturally and linguistically diverse students -- in violation of the "general principle." Low expectations translate into "dumbed down" curricula and teaching and have adverse effects on students' self esteem, aspirations and motivation. Raising student motivation, enhancing academic expectations and exposing students to challenging curriculum are prescribed solutions drawn from current knowledge of "what works."

Implications

An appreciation of the implications of the perspectives discussed above requires that as educators introduce "Best Practices" the following should be taken into account:

- That language, culture, and their accompanying values, are acquired in the home and community environment (Cummins, 1986; Goldman & Trueba, 1987; Brice Heath, 1981)

- That children learn higher level cognitive and communicative skills as they engage in socially meaningful activities (Duran, 1987)

- That children come to school with some knowledge about what language is, how it works, and what it is used for (Goodman, 1980; Hall, 1987; Smith, 1971)

■ That children's development and learning is best understood as the interaction of linguistic, socio-cultural, and cognitive knowledge and experiences (Trueba, 1988)

■ That learning is enhanced when it occurs in contexts that are both socio-culturally and linguistically meaningful for the learner (Cole, 1996; Díaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1986; Brice Heath, 1986; Scribner & Cole, 1981; Wertsch, 1985).

■ Covington (1996) further emphasizes that students learn best and teachers feel most satisfied when both are encouraged to become allies in the learning process and when cooperation and sharing are hallmarks of the classroom.

Such classrooms, however, are not where most culturally diverse students spend their days. Rather, the pedagogy, curriculum, instruction, classroom configuration and language (Walker, 1987) of most conventional schools tend to dramatize the lack of fit between the culturally diverse student and the monolithic school culture and to increase students' academic vulnerability. Common characteristics of such classrooms are:

■ The systematic exclusion of the students' histories, language, experience, and values from classroom curricula and activities (Giroux & McLaren, 1986; Ogbu, 1982)

■ Learning environments which do not foster academic development for all populations of students (Duran, 1986; Eder, 1982; Oakes, 1990)

■ Tracking practices which limit access to academic courses, undermine perception of self as a competent learner and language user, and limit opportunities to engage in learning other than teacher-led instruction (Cazden, 1988; García, 1988). Since culture is rarely shared between culturally diverse students and their teachers, the limitations imposed by tracking virtually preclude opportunities for learning that are developmentally and culturally appropriate.

A Responsive Pedagogy

The rethinking that I encourage here has profound implications for the teaching/learning enterprise as it relates to culturally diverse students (García, 1994). The new pedagogy we espouse is one which redefines the classroom as a community of learners: one in which speakers, readers, and writers come together to define and redefine the meaning of the academic experience. It may be described as a pedagogy of empowerment (Cummins, 1986), as a cultural learning approach (Brice Heath, 1986; Trueba, 1987), or as a cultural view of providing instructional assistance/guidance (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Whatever it is called, it is a pedagogy based on respect for and integration of

culturally diverse students' values, beliefs, histories, and experiences within the classroom. It recognizes and affirms the active role that students must play in their learning processes. *A responsive pedagogy* encompasses practical, contextual, and empirical knowledge within a "world view" of education that evolves through meaningful interactions among teachers, students, and other school community members. Responsive pedagogy expands students' knowledge beyond their own immediate experiences while using those experiences as useful vehicles for constructing knowledge.

Of course, a pedagogy that is responsive to the significance of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity is one that both emerges from and requires a particular learning environment. Already, considerable work has been devoted to restructuring schools and to changing fundamental relationships that exist among school personnel, students, families, and community members. Yet those efforts have seldom given more than passing attention to the unique influences of the linguistic and sociocultural dimensions of the school structures and relationships. While the environments that can support and nurture the development of a responsive pedagogy are not unlike those promoted by advocates of school reform and school restructuring, I suggest that we need to go further. We need to recognize that incorporating social, cultural, and linguistic diversity concerns as elements of our educational redesign will lead us to a set of educational principles and dimensions that are more likely to meet the challenges faced by schools whose populations of diverse students are growing.

Effective Schools/Responsive Learning Communities

The learning environments essential to the development of a responsive pedagogy are referred to as "Effective Schooling" (García, 1997) and "High Performance Learning Communities (Berman, et al., 1995). The social, cultural, and linguistic diversity represented by students in today's public schools challenges us to consider the theoretical and practical means by which they can achieve educational success. High performance learning communities will have to address issues of diversity in order to maximize their potential and guarantee improvement over time. Chart 1 summarizes the conceptual dimensions for high performance responsive learning communities.

Chart 1 Conceptual Dimensions of a Responsive Pedagogy: Addressing Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in High Performance Learning Communities

Schoolwide Practices

- A vision defined by the acceptance and valuing of diversity with high academic performance as the goal -- Americanization and /or Equal Educational Opportunity are NOT the goals
- Treatment of classroom practitioners as professionals, colleagues in school development decisions
- Decisions characterized by collaboration, flexibility, and enhanced professional development
- Elimination (gradual or immediate) of policies that seek to categorize diverse students thereby rendering their educational experiences as inferior or limiting for further academic learning
- Reflection of and connection to surrounding community -- particularly with the families of the students attending the school

Teacher Practices

- Bilingual/bicultural skills and awareness
- High expectations of diverse students
- Treatment of diversity as an asset to the classroom
- Ongoing professional development on issues of cultural and linguistic diversity and practices that are most effective
- Bases of curriculum development to address cultural and linguistic diversity:

  1. Attention to and integration of home culture/practices

  2. Focus on maximizing student interactions across categories of English proficiency, academic performance, recency of immigration, etc.

  3. Regular and consistent attempts to elicit ideas from students for planning units, themes, activities

  4. Thematic approach to learning activities -- with the integration of various skills, events, learning opportunities

  5. Focus on language development through meaningful interactions and communications versus grammatical skill-building that is removed from its appropriate context

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Conclusion

In summary, the creation of a responsive learning community requires the recognition that academic learning is influenced by processes whose roots are both inside of school and outside of school. The conditions for a responsive learning community are incompatible with an "Americanization" strategy that denies or belittles the worth of "diverse" cultures. Their goals and expectations are set beyond the limits of an "Equal Educational Opportunity" policy and practice framework. A responsive learning community focuses on responsive instructional engagement. It encourages students to construct and reconstruct meaning and to seek reinterpretations and augmentations of past knowledge within compatible and nurturing school contexts. Thus, diversity is perceived as and acted on as a resource for teaching and learning instead of as a problem to be corrected. The focus is on what students bring to the schooling process, which generates an asset/resource-oriented approach instead of a deficit/needs assessment approach. Within a knowledge-driven, responsive and engaging learning environment, skills are not the fundamental targets of learning/teaching events, but rather are recognized as valuable and needed tools for the acquisition of knowledge (Cole, 1996; García, 1994; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

It follows that the search for general principles of learning that will work for all students must be redirected toward a search for and documentation of the particular implementations of both "general" and "non-general" principles of teaching and learning which best serve a diverse set of environments, both in and out of school. This "search and document" mission requires our best understanding of how individuals whose diverse sets of experiences, packaged collectively as cultures, "make meaning". We must learn to understand how they communicate and extend that meaning, particularly within the social contexts we call schools. Such a mission requires in-depth exploration of the processes by which diversity is produced and of issues of socialization within and without schools. It must be coupled with a clear examination of how such understanding is actually transformed into the pedagogy and the curriculum which can create high-performance learning for all students.

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Chapter 2

Attributes of Effective Schools and Classrooms for English-Language Learners

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Overview

Although the numbers of English-language learners are increasing, their educational attainment as a group remains low. For example, a recent study mandated by Congress indicates that English-language learners receive lower grades, are judged by their teachers to have lower academic abilities, and score below their classmates on standardized tests of reading and math (Moss & Puma, 1995). Exceptionally high-drop out rates have been reported for these students as well (Bennici & Strang, 1995).

The reasons for the poor school performance of these English-language learners are complex. However, they stem in part from educational practices that are not aligned with the students' needs. For example, most programs for English-language learners are guided by a less rigorous curriculum than those available to other students and few schools offer a full academic program -- at whatever level of difficulty -- to LEP students (Berman et al., 1992). There is a pressing need to examine the current knowledge base regarding effective education for English-language learners and to identify attributes of effective practices. A literature search conducted for a National Research Council Report, *Educating Language Minority Children*[1], identified salient attributes of effective practices. The summary descriptions of those attributes from the report are listed verbatim in the following section[2]. Exemplary programs and practices which embody those attributes are presented for illustration. Except when noted otherwise, a pseudonym has been provided for the schools and/or teachers, which were part of the national sample of observations conducted at schools where teachers had been nominated or elected as effective teachers. Most of the exemplary programs and practices discussed are documented in *Attributes of Effective Programs and Classrooms Serving English-Language Learners*[3].

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[1] The author co-edited this publication with Kenji Hakuta. It was published as a report of the National Research Council. The full report can be purchased from the National Academy Press (202-334-3313).

[2] It is important to keep in mind that "the attributes discussed here represent concepts refracted through at least two sets of lenses (the original investigators' and this writers), that the empirical bases for making strong causal claims vary considerably and are sometimes unknown, and that there are caveats associated with some of the attributes. For example, different attributes may be more or less important for different age groups or different ethnic groups. Therefore, none of these individual attributes should be considered necessary or sufficient conditions for the schooling of English-language learners (National Research Council, 1997)."

[3] This paper was co-authored with Lucinda Pease-Alvarez and published through the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning. The full paper can be ordered through the Center for Applied Linguistics (202-429-9292).

Attributes of Effective Instruction

Supportive School-Wide Climate

Carter and Chatfield (1986), Moll (1988), Lucas, Henze, and Donato (1990), Tikunoff (1983), Tikunoff et al. (1991), Berman et al. (1992, 1995), and Minicucci and Olsen (1992) report that a positive school-wide climate was a feature of the effective or exemplary schools they studied. The schools varied in their particular manifestations of such a climate, but the following three features were prevalent: (1) value placed on the linguistic and cultural background of English-language learners, (2) high expectations for their academic achievement, and (3) their integral involvement in the overall school operation.

Exemplars

The curriculum at Douglas School focuses on the same set of grade level standards regardless of the students' linguistic or cultural background. These standards are addressed through various approaches in students' regular classrooms, content ESL classes, and native language classes.

The Community School of Rochester New York is a teacher and community-initiated school where all facets of the school are decided upon jointly by teachers, parents, and community representatives. Consequently, no one person or group is responsible for the school philosophy, covenant, and curriculum. An over-arching goal of the school is to ensure that (1) all students are provided with an equal opportunity to learn the same challenging content and high-level skills, and that (2) proficiency in two or more languages will be promoted for all students attending the school.

School Leadership

Consistent with findings of the effective schools research that began two decades ago, school-level leadership appears to be a critical dimension of effective schooling for English-language learners (Carter & Chatfield, 1986; Goldenberg & Sullivan, 1994; Lucas et al., 1990; Tikunoff et al., 1991). At least half of the studies reviewed name leadership, often the principal's, as an important factor. The role of leadership can also be inferred from several of the other studies that do not explicitly cite it. Numerous studies (Carter & Chatfield, 1986) and (Lucas et al., 1990) cite that in schools with strong leadership, the principal provides continuous direction and supervision of curriculum and instruction, recruits skilled and committed staff, includes the entire staff in improvement efforts, and ensures a safe and stimulating environment.

Exemplar

At Linda Vista Elementary School, San Diego, California (Berman et. al., 1995), restructuring efforts were initially led by the principal. The principal created a climate at the school that supported experimentation, in which faculty could take risks, make mistakes, and correct them in order to implement effective practices. Within this climate, the principal acted as instructional leader among the faculty by facilitating and/or assisting on issues related to curriculum development and instructional techniques. The principal provided teachers with both training and time to learn and to plan together. As a result, teachers felt empowered to re-design the school and to respond to their growing diverse population more effectively.

Customized Learning Environment

Staff in effective schools and classrooms design the learning environment to reflect school and community contextual factors and goals while meeting the diverse needs of their students (Berman et al., 1992, 1995; Lucas et al., 1990; Moll, 1988; Samaniego & Eubank, 1991; Tikunoff et al., 1991). Many researchers have noted that there is no one right way to educate English-language learners; different approaches are necessary because of the great diversity of conditions faced by schools and students. These researchers recommend that local staff and community members identify the conditions under which one or some combination of approaches is best suited and then adapt models to match their particular circumstances.

As an example, Lucas et al. (1990) found that English-language learners are more likely to achieve when a school's curriculum responds to their individual needs by offering variety in three areas: (1) the skills, abilities, and knowledge classes are designed to develop (i.e., native-language development, ESL, subject matter knowledge), (2) the degrees of difficulty and sophistication among available classes (i.e., advanced as well as low-level classes), and (3) the approaches to teaching content (i.e., native-language instruction, content ESL, and specially designed instruction in English).

Exemplar

Native language maintenance is a concern of parents and educators throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. At the San Ramón School, parents and educators have come together to address this problem by making sure that the Spanish-speaking and English-speaking children who attend this school have opportunities to use and learn in both languages. To achieve this goal the curriculum is organized so that a specific language is allocated to a specific content area. For example, science is taught in English during the primary years while math is taught in Spanish.

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Children have access to language arts classes in both Spanish and English. When it came to addressing this issue at Wilson school, which serves over 15 different language groups, parents opted for developing an after school native language program. This program, which is both run and financed by parents, provides language arts classes in Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Farsi, and Russian. Teachers are recruited from the local community. Parents pay a small fee for enrolling their children in 60 minute classes that are held on Tuesday and Wednesday. Prior to initiating classes, teacher receive classes on how to enhance the development of native language literacy by the district director of bilingual education.

Articulation and Coordination Within and Between Schools

Effective schools are characterized by a smooth transition between levels of language development classes (e.g., between content-based ESL and sheltered instruction) and coordination and articulation between special second-language programs and other school programs, as well as between levels of schooling (Berman et al., 1995; Calderón, Hertz-Lazarowitz, & Slavin, 1996; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992; Saunders, O'Brien, Lennon, & McLean, 1996; Short, 1994; Slavin & Yampolsky, 1992). In many of the schools studied, there was collaboration between special language teachers and mainstream classroom or content teachers to articulate students' instructional programs. Moreover, in these schools the transition from special language instruction to mainstream classes was gradual, carefully planned, and supported with activities (prior to reclassification and after mainstreaming) designed to ensure students' success.

Exemplar

At the Douglas school, English language learners have contact with several different teachers and aides. They spend their morning with classroom teachers who are responsible for the areas of math and language arts. In the afternoon they spend an hour in classes taught in their native languages that are organized around science and social studies concepts that have been decided upon by the entire teaching staff at each grade level. These classes are taught by native speakers of students' home languages who are recruited from the local community. During the final hour of the school day, students participate in ESL content classes taught by another teacher who focuses on many of the same science and social studies concepts that were addressed by native language teachers. For this model to work effectively, classroom teachers, native language teachers, and ESL teachers meet on a regular basis one hour per week to plan the curriculum and discuss students' progress. Four staff development days per year are also devoted to joint planning and curriculum development.

Use of Native Language and Culture

The advantages of native-language use are a prominent and recurring theme in many studies. (e.g., Berman et al., 1995; Calderón et al., 1996; Carter and Chatfield, 1986; Goldenberg and Sullivan, 1994; Henderson & Landesman, 1992; Hernandez, 1991; Lucas et al., 1990; Muñiz-Swicegood, 1994; Pease-Alvarez, García, & Espinosa, 1991; Rosebery, Warren, & Conant, 1992; and Tikunoff, 1983) Even those studies that report on Special Alternative Instructional Programs, where most instruction takes place in English, cite teachers' effective use of students' native languages to clarify and elaborate on points made in English (Tikunoff et al., 1991). Moreover, findings from a study of nine Special Alternative Instructional Programs indicate that even in exemplary programs designed to provide instruction primarily in English, the classrooms were "multilingual environments in which students' native languages served a multitude of purposes and functions. Across sites, native language use emerged as a persistent and key instructional strategy realized in very site-specific ways" (Lucas and Katz, 1994, p. 545).

Exemplar

The goal of the bilingual program at the Linda Vista School in San Diego, California (Berman et al., 1995) is to have native-Spanish speaking students reading in Spanish at the second or third grade level before moving into English classrooms. Language arts are taught completely in Spanish until the student is considered ready for transition into English, at which point the student is moved into an all-English transition class. Students progress through levels of instruction at their own pace based upon a review of student progress by the LEP Review Team which includes the student's current teacher, a resource teacher and the principal.

Balanced Curriculum

In much of the research, classroom teachers combine basic and higher-order skills. In the *Success for All* schools, for example, there is a balance between instruction in basic and higher-order skills at all grade levels. *Success for All*'s strong outcomes make the balance of these two levels of instruction very compelling. Another example of the effectiveness of a balanced curriculum is provided by both Goldenberg and Gallimore (1991) and Goldenberg and Sullivan (1994). They report that the schools they worked with and studied included a "balanced" literacy program in which key skills and subjects such as phonics, word recognition, specific comprehension skills, and writing conventions were taught. Moreover, they argue that early reading achievement

improved at those schools partly because teachers incorporated language and meaning-based approaches into a system that had previously relied on basic decoding skills as the only avenue for learning to read.

Exemplar

At the Hill Elementary School, grades K-1, teachers provided a combined approach to teaching reading. They had a "balanced" literacy program in which key skills and subjects such as phonics, word recognition, specific comprehension skills, and word recognition were taught along with instruction that focused on meaning-based approaches and the development of higher-order skills.

Explicit Skills Instruction

The studies reviewed indicate that effective teachers for English-language learners use explicit skills instruction for certain tasks, mostly (though not always) to help students acquire basic skills (Carter & Chatfield, 1986; Goldenberg & Sullivan, 1994; Slavin & Yampolosky, 1992; Tikunoff, 1983; Wong Fillmore, Ammon, McLaughlin, & Ammon, 1985). The value of explicit skills instruction is corroborated by other researchers. According to Sternberg (1986), explicit skills instruction is highly effective for some tasks (e.g., teaching subject matter knowledge, knowledge of hierarchical relationships among bits of information, and knowledge of valid strategies in science, and enhancing beginning readers' ability to decode and use process strategies such as summarization, clarification, questioning, and prediction to enhance comprehension). Executive processes such as comprehension monitoring can also be taught through explicit skills instruction if developmentally appropriate for the student. Rosenshine and Stevens (1986) argue that explicit teaching is highly effective for well-structured skill and knowledge domains such as math computation, explicit reading comprehension strategies, map reading, and decoding.

Exemplar

Teachers at Harold Wiggs Middle School, El Paso Independent School District Texas (Berman et. al., 1995) use explicit instruction to ensure that students have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in the many different tasks that they are involved in on a daily basis. The use of explicit instruction includes clarification (in English or native language), demonstration and/or redefinition of processes and expected outcomes.

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Opportunities for Student-Directed Activities

The studies reviewed indicate that teachers supplement explicit skills instruction, characteristic of the initial effective schools research, with student-directed activities such as cooperative learning, partner reading, and collaborative inquiry (Berman et al., 1995; Calderón et al., 1996; Cohen, 1984; Gersten, 1996; Henderson and Landesman, 1992; Hernandez, 1991; Moll, 1988; Muñiz-Swicegood, 1994; Pease-Alvarez et al., 1991; Rosebery et al., 1992; Saunders et al., 1996).

Exemplar

In Berta Hernandez's second grade classroom at Union School, a Spanish/English bilingual school located in a rural community along California's central coast, children spend the majority of their morning participating in a wide range of activities or experiences that focus on a particular concept, ability, or theme. Ms. Hernandez organizes this portion of the school day so that children are involved in a series of related learning activities that they pursue either independently or with others. For example, during language arts time, different tables and areas of the classroom are set up to accommodate the following activities: journal writing, story dictation, choral book reading, reading a book with the assistance of a tape-recorded version of that book, or letter writing. Small groups of children from a variety of ability and language backgrounds work at each of these centers with one another, alone or with assistance from a teacher or adult volunteer. At regular intervals, a bell sounds to let the children know that it is time to move on to a different center.

Instructional Strategies That Enhance Understanding

Effective teachers of English-language learners use specially tailored strategies to enhance understanding. Examples include teaching metacognitive strategies (Chamot, Dale, O'Malley, & Spanos, 1992; Dianda & Flaherty, 1995; Hernandez, 1991; Muñiz-Swicegood, 1994) and using routines (Calderón et al., 1996; Edelsky, Draper, & Smith, 1983). Making instruction comprehensible to English-language learners by adjusting the level of English vocabulary and structure so it is appropriate for the students given their current level of proficiency in English is another important strategy and entails the following:

- using explicit discourse markers such as "first" and "next";
- calling attention to the language in the course of using it;

- using the language in ways that reveal its structure;
- providing explicit discussion of vocabulary and structure;
- explaining and in some cases demonstrating what students will be doing or experiencing; providing students with appropriate background knowledge;
- building on students' previous knowledge and understanding to establish a connection between personal experience and the subject matter they are learning; and
- using manipulatives, pictures, objects, and film related to the subject matter.

(Gersten 1996; Mace-Matluck et al., 1989; Saunders et al., 1996; Short, 1994; Tharp, 1982; Wong Fillmore et al., 1985).

Exemplars

Ms. Reed meets with a group of seven English language learners several times during the day for a variety of reasons (e.g., for language arts instruction, for one-on-one tutoring). One recurring theme of these meetings, which may last as long as thirty minutes or as few as three minutes, is to discuss and describe future events and activities. For example, she spent fifteen minutes on activities and discussion that focused on an impending field trip to a nearby forest. During this meeting, she told the students about the forest, provided pictures of the terrain that they would be going through, got them to talk about their previous experiences in forests, and provided new vocabulary that they would be having to deal with in their interactions with the nature guides. During this interaction she was able to address individual questions that students had about the forest and what they would be encountering there. One student, who mistook the word guide for guy asked her "How can the guys have name Mary and Suzy?" Ms. Reed was able to clarify her misunderstanding immediately in the small group.

Ms. Riles' second grade students, the majority of whom are English language learners, come from several different language groups. To facilitate their understanding and participation, she has developed a set of recurring routines that take place throughout the school day. For example, she and her students typically begin the day with greetings and announcements. Routines that characterize those times of the day dedicated to math, science, and language arts include an introductory time when the teacher provides students with an overview of a concept that will be addressed in different ways through a variety of different activities that are set up in designated areas throughout the classroom. She also takes time to demonstrate or model each activity. Closure is a ten minute period that ends a block of time devoted to a particular subject area. During this time, the teachers asks the same set of questions: What went well at each center? What was hard to do? What would you have done differently?

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Opportunities for Practice

This attribute entails building repetition into activities, giving English-language learners opportunities to interact with fluent English-speaking peers, and providing opportunities for extended dialogue (Calderón et al., 1996; Berman et al., 1995; García, 1990a; Gersten, 1996; Saunders et al., 1996; Tikunoff et al., 1991; Wong Fillmore et al., 1985). One method of providing opportunity for extended dialogue is the "instructional conversation" -- discussion-based lessons focused on an idea or concept that has both educational value and meaning and relevance for students. The teacher encourages students to express their ideas either orally or in writing not just to the teacher, but also to classmates, and guides them to increasingly sophisticated levels of understanding (Saunders et al., 1996; Saunders & Goldenberg, in press).

Systematic Student Assessment

Many studies have found that effective schools use systematic student assessment -- a feature identified in the effective and nominated schools research -- to inform ongoing efforts to improve achievement (Carter & Chatfield, 1986; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1991; Goldenberg & Sullivan, 1994; Slavin & Yampolsky, 1992; Slavin & Madden, 1994). In these schools, students are assessed on a regular basis to determine whether they need additional or different assistance; programmatic changes are made on this basis.

Exemplar

At the Linda Vista School in San Diego, California (Berman et al., 1995), staff have developed an assessment system suitable for an ungraded learning environment in which students are at many levels of English language proficiency. Authentic, portfolio-based assessment is used to record student progress toward specified outcomes and standards. Staff reports that standards and rubrics have made instruction and assessing student growth much easier, and that development of these various ways of measuring student growth is a constantly evolving process. Student work is scored using standards and rubrics, then scanned and stored on the computer in "electronic portfolios." Student growth is recorded in the "Growth Record;" these records are shared with parents and used for assessing student's readiness to advance.

Staff Development

Staff training and development are important components of effective schools for English-language learners not identified in the original effective schools research. As previously mentioned, one important way to raise teacher expectations is to increase student achievement by helping teachers acquire the skills and knowledge needed to be more successful with students, rather than

exhorting teachers to raise their expectations. Often the training identified in the studies reviewed here is specific to teachers of these students, such as English-language development and use of sheltered instruction (Lucas et al., 1990). In other instances (e.g., Slavin & Madden, 1994; Slavin & Yampolsky, 1992), the training is in instructional strategies that are specific to the implemented program, such as use of thematic units, vocabulary development, classroom management, instructional pace, and cooperative learning, but not targeted at English-language learners per se.

Staff development for all teachers in the school, not just language specialists, was an important component of many of these programs (Berman et al., 1995; Carter & Chatfield, 1986; Lucas et al., 1990; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992). Although the programs provided ongoing staff development directly related to resolving new instructional issues for ESL and bilingual education teachers, they also recruited excellent content area teachers and trained them in English-language development strategies.

In preparing teachers, Moll and his colleagues (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992) have avoided one pitfall often associated with culturally responsive pedagogy (defined as teaching practices attuned to the cultural background of students) -- the tendency to base instructional practices on teachers' assumptions and stereotypical beliefs about groups of students. They base professional development on empirical findings about the community, rather than stereotypes.

A real question that remains is what sort of training is most relevant for improving school processes, as well as teacher knowledge and skills. It is also important to validate the effectiveness of this training through assessments of student outcomes.

Exemplar

At the Inter-American School in Chicago, Illinois (Berman et al., 1995), the weekly schedule has been modified by dismissing students early on Fridays to accommodate staff development. This Friday-afternoon staff development is teacher initiated with the staff determining their own training needs. Recent staff development activities have focused on alternative assessment, dual language strategies, ESL approaches, cooperative learning, and peer coaching. Each of these topics grew out of needs to improve a specific aspect of the school's program.

Home and Parent Involvement

Home and parent involvement -- an attribute that, like staff development, was not a part of the original effective schools conceptualization -- plays an

important role in enhancing outcomes for English-language learners. Moll (1988), García (1990b), Carter and Chatfield (1986), and Lucas et al. (1990) all note that in the effective schools they document, an ongoing community/school process is an important contributor to the school's success.

Neither the studies reviewed here nor any other existing studies can answer the question of what type of home or parent involvement is most effective. Extrapolating from the observations in these studies, however, two hypotheses seem reasonable: First, cognitive or academic effects are most likely to be the result of home-school connections that focus specifically on cognitive or academic learning at home, that is, increasing and improving home learning opportunities through the use of homework or other organized activities designed to promote learning. Second, schools with comprehensive home involvement programs encompassing various types of home-school connections probably help families and children in a number of important ways. The more types of productive connections homes and schools can forge, the more positive and powerful the effects on children, families, and schools will be. At least in U.S. settings, these hypotheses are probably valid regardless of students' cultural or language background (Goldenberg, 1993).

Exemplar

The bilingual teachers at Del Monte Elementary School, located in a farming community on California's Central Coast, involve parents in a series of Sunday afternoon get togethers. These get togethers are designed to be festive times when parents, teachers, students, and other family members partake in a meal and entertainment (e.g., singing, dancing, student performances). Each gathering focuses on a particular curricular area (i.e., language arts, science, math) that is part of the teachers' instructional program. Under the teachers' guidance, parents take on the role of students and participate in many of the same instructional activities in a given subject that form the core of the teacher's instructional program (e.g., writers' workshop, hands on math, readers workshop, etc.). Afterward, teachers provide a rationale for these instructional activities and generate discussion among parents regarding the efficacy of a particularly activity or approach as well as the way it compares with the instructional experiences of parents in their native countries. Finally, teachers offer recommendations regarding the kinds of things parents can do to enhance their children's learning in a particular curricular area.

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Conclusion

In this brief article, I have identified research-based school and classroom conditions that will enable English-language learners to meet new challenging educational standards. By elaborating on these conditions and in some cases providing exemplars, I hope that I have offered a vision and encouragement of what is possible for these students.

Although these attributes provide important guidance for developing effective programs and instructional strategies for English-language learners, they need to be assessed in the context of schools and classrooms in which they are being implemented. To determine their effectiveness, it is important to evaluate the extent to which they have been implemented and to measure associated student outcomes.

Prospective research that examines the school change process is also needed, beginning from the point before a school undertakes change, to document the processes and outcomes on a sound theoretical basis. Prospective studies should document the problems, possibilities, dynamics, successes, and outcomes of school and program change. An important focus should be on how schools and teachers maintain effective components once in place. Research should also determine which kinds of improvement strategies are exportable and which aspects may be influenced by local context.

Finally, I would like to credit the work of my colleagues who contributed to the original studies referenced in this report -- Cindy Pease-Alvarez *(Attributes of Effective Programs and Classrooms Serving English-Language Learners)* and the National Research Council Committee on Developing a Research Agenda on the Education of Limited-English-Proficient and Bilingual Students, which included: Kenji Hakuta, James Banks, Donna Christian, Richard Duran, Carl Kaestle, David Kenny, Gaea Leinhardt, Alba Ortiz, Lucinda Pease-Alvarez, Catherine Snow, and Deborah Stipek.

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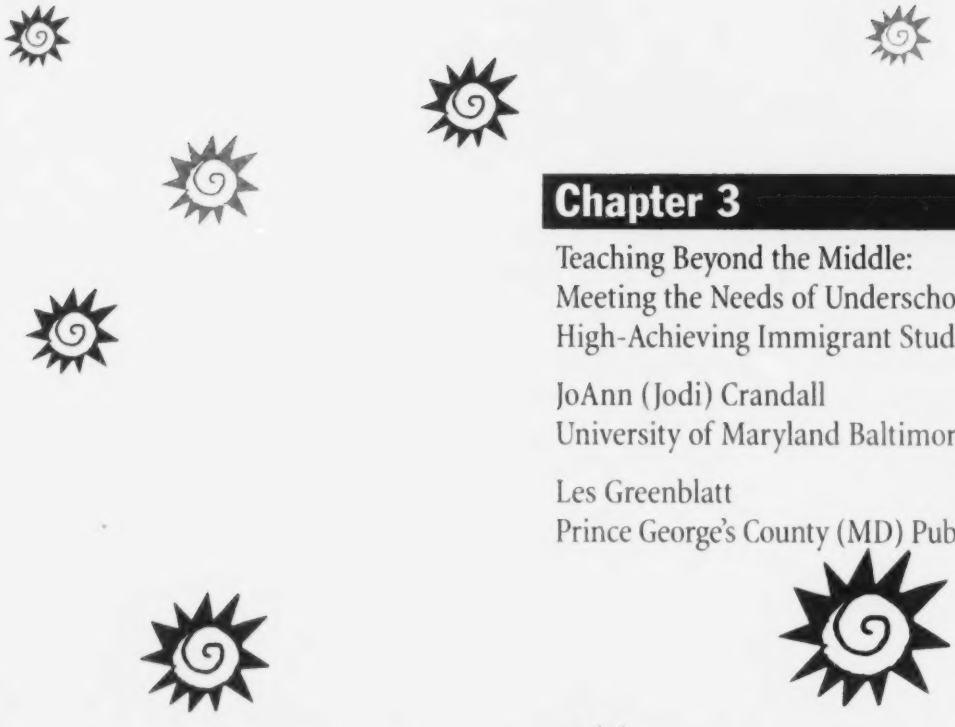

Chapter 3

Teaching Beyond the Middle: Meeting the Needs of Underschooled and High-Achieving Immigrant Students

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This article summarizes the content of two presentations given at a Mid-Atlantic Equity Center conference titled "Excellence and Equity for Language Minority Students: Critical Issues and Promising Practices," which took place in College Park, Maryland on May 14, 1997. All of the presenters were involved in Project WE TEACH, a secondary school immigrant education project. They included: Ron Anderson (vice principal) and Patricia Chiancone, Laurie Hortie, Janet Hutner, and Olivia Tate, teachers at Northwestern High School; Heather Utt, a teacher at Nicholas Orem Middle School; Hahn On and Honey Morales, former Northwestern High School students who are now attending Trinity College in Washington, DC; Valerie Kengni and Nazareth Aregai, students at Northwestern High School; and the authors, who direct the project.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the insights gained from four years of research and program implementation of Project WE TEACH (**W**hen **E**veryone **T**eaches, **E**veryone **A**chieves), a national demonstration project funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to implement and refine a school-based model for improving the secondary education of immigrant students. The project was implemented in the Prince George's County Public Schools, in Maryland. The County is representative of an increasing number of school districts where the African American and immigrant population constitutes the majority. Language minority students come from over 135 countries and speak 131 different languages. Through the use of student profiles, this article will describe the challenges and successes encountered in working with two selected groups of immigrant students. These include students with limited prior education and literacy (underschooled students), and high achieving immigrant students with great potential for college success. In addition, the article provides a summary of the program's key features, including policy and program recommendations for replication. It is our hope that these ideas can be adapted by other schools and districts to assist these two groups of traditionally underserved bilingual students.

Student Profiles

Jorge is a fourteen-year old Salvadoran student who has been in the United States for less than a year. His father immigrated to the United States shortly after Jorge's birth; his mother and brother followed soon after. A younger sister was later born in the United States. Jorge remained in El Salvador with his grandparents, working on a farm and never knowing his immediate family until

this past summer. He was unable to attend school in El Salvador because of the expense. His first year of school was in a middle school in the United States. He attended summer school, where he learned to count to one hundred and to copy from the blackboard through one-to-one tutoring. When school began in September, Jorge had a positive attitude, but he fell progressively behind. Jorge's brother began calling him "stupid," after which Jorge's progress rapidly deteriorated, and his behavior became disruptive.

Beverly arrived from Jamaica in the eighth grade. Although she reported having previously attended school, the "book" she used in Jamaica for all her classes was a slim workbook. As a result, she can read and write only a few words, and there are large gaps in her academic content knowledge. Currently she lives with her father and two younger siblings whom she babysits every day after school. Her mother has remained in Jamaica and does not plan on joining the others, since "she has a new family." Beverly speaks a Creolized English which differs enough from American English that "people make fun of the way she talks," and she is having a difficult time "adjusting to the United States, especially the language."

Gabriel is a seventeen-year old senior who came to the United States as a ninth grader. Originally from Eritrea, his father fought and died in the extended war of independence against Ethiopia. The rest of the family lived for many years as refugees in the Sudan and in other African countries before entering the United States as refugees. Gabriel and his sister work nearly full-time after school to support themselves and their mother, who works in a minimum wage job at a local hospital. Gabriel is a motivated student who wants to go to a good college. His mother expects him to go to a prestigious college and to become a professional so that he can support the family. However, his grades are only average because of significant gaps in his education due to his family's constant relocation and his current work schedule. His low SAT and TOEFL scores further hinder his being accepted by a local competitive four-year college.

Elena came to the United States as a tenth grader from El Salvador. Since her arrival in the United States, she has worked at a variety of jobs, often for thirty to forty hours a week as a busgirl or waitress to supplement the income of her mother, who is a babysitter, and her father, who is a cook. Even though she works long hours, she has done well in all of her courses, earning a place in the National Honor Society, as well as a state award for academic excellence. She has also been involved in a variety of school activities and is considered a role model by her peers and her teachers. She will be the first in her family to finish high school and wants to attend college to become a teacher of young children. However, in her final year in high school, she has modified her dreams and is now planning to attend a part-time program to prepare herself for work in a daycare center.

Luisa is a seventeen-year old student from the Dominican Republic who came to the United States in elementary school. As a high school student, she has maintained a high GPA and is very involved in school activities and clubs. She is known as a bright and responsible student. Teachers assumed she would go to college. However, as of the second semester of her senior year, Luisa has made no college plans. She has received no information from counselors about post-secondary possibilities and is virtually unaware of the college application process. She has not taken the SAT and she has not applied for any financial aid, although she knows that her family cannot afford to pay for college expenses.

These five (pseudonymous) students are from one school district, but they are like many secondary school immigrant students across the United States. These students have a variety of talents and strengths, but given their language backgrounds and socioeconomic status, they face greater challenges than their "mainstream" counterparts. If they are to achieve their potential and their dreams, schools need to recognize and address their special needs. These critical needs might include among others: a comprehensive assessment of their specific academic and language needs; proper placement; an effective orientation to the new school culture; and access to an academic program that addresses their English language and academic achievement needs. It is important to understand that these children, unlike other children who have command of the English language and/or who have been in this country since they were born, must learn English not only quickly, but fluently enough to use it in an English-medium classroom for their academic subjects.

Unfortunately, schools are not always responsive to these needs and tend to focus their resources and programs toward the "average student," as opposed to those who need literacy instruction and additional schooling, or those whose high achievement warrants special encouragement and attention. School administrators and teachers often do not understand how to meet the needs of these students and what resources are required for the task. Working within this context, we were nonetheless able to develop a number of new initiatives, leading to new courses and programs which can help students like Jorge, Beverly, Gabriel, Elena, and Luisa. These programs enrich opportunities for the "average student" as well. In this article, we describe how these initiatives were implemented in four secondary (two middle and two high) schools. We also suggest ways in which they can be integrated into the regular curriculum and how they can be adapted by other schools.

Project WE TEACH: Background

The primary goal of Project WE TEACH is to improve the English language, literacy, and academic achievement of immigrant secondary school students and to provide them better access to postsecondary education and employment. The project focuses on transitions: from English language and literacy classes to regular content instruction; from elementary school to middle school, from middle school to high school, from high school to college, and from college to a career. For graduate students participating in the project, the program focuses on their transition from graduate students to teacher interns to first-year teachers. A secondary goal of the project is to encourage immigrant students to consider teaching as a career, in the hopes of meeting the demand for language minority teachers to serve as mentors and role models at a time when the percentage of minority students is on the rise and the percentage of language minority teachers is on the decline[1].

WE TEACH is a collaborative effort among the ESOL/Bilingual Teacher Education Program at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), the ESOL/Language Minority Program of Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland, the Center for Applied Linguistics, and the Prince George's County Coalition for the Foreign Born -- a group of public and private social service and educational agencies, businesses, and community-based organizations which advocate for the immigrant community in the county. The project has created a professional development network consisting of teacher educators, teachers, administrators, and community members who are sharing their knowledge and resources towards educating immigrant students.

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[1] Census data and other demographics studies (García, 1994) indicate that today one out of three children in the United States is from an ethnic or racial minority group, one out of seven speaks a language other than English at home, and one out of fifteen was born outside the United States. However, supply and demand studies reveal that as "the student population becomes more culturally heterogeneous, the teaching force is expected to become increasingly homogeneous" (Villegas et al., 1995:6). Today, only about 14 percent of current public and private school teachers are members of a non-Caucasian racial/ethnic group. Conversely, K-12 minority enrollment has exceeded 31 percent and continues to increase steadily. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education 1994 report on the diversity status of today's teaching workforce, Teacher Education Pipeline III (AACTE, 1994), indicates that while teacher education enrollment has increased by approximately 10 percent since 1989, the number of teachers of color has not increased significantly. Moreover, these studies reveal that the number of minority teachers is expected to fall 6 percent by the year 2000 (Spellman, 1988, cited in Hill et al., 1993).

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PGCPS: Addressing the challenges of a growing culturally and linguistically diverse school population

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), with a population of 125,000 students, is the eighteenth largest school district in the United States (Maryland State Department of Education, 1997b). The county is proximate to Washington, D.C. and has a large and diverse immigrant population. Many of the immigrants are former residents of the District of Columbia who have left the city to seek a better life in a suburban setting. Others are newcomers to the United States (refugees and immigrants) who have come to join the established Latino, Asian, and Caribbean immigrant communities. These groups combine with a large and growing African-American population, many of whom have also moved from the city.

Prince George's County has experienced dramatic changes in its demographics -- from 67% "white" in 1974, to 73% "black" in 1997 (Maryland State Department of Education, 1975, 1997a). This has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the number of "international students" -- namely, students born outside the United States or those born in the United States who speak a language other than English -- from just a few hundred in the early 1970's to more than 10,000 today. Some schools are reporting a 25% - 50% immigrant population (i.e., the schools that Jorge, Beverly, Gabriel, Elena, and Luisa attend). These international students come from 135 countries, with El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, the Philippines, Guyana, Trinidad, Sierra Leone, India, Guatemala, Vietnam, and the United States representing the highest numbers. Moreover, they speak 131 different languages, with Spanish, Filipino, Vietnamese, French, Korean, Krio, Mandarin Chinese, Yoruba, Urdu, Amharic, and Cambodian being the most highly represented (Prince George's County Public Schools, 1997). The county is also home to a fast-growing population of international students who speak varieties of English that differ substantially from the standard American English expected in the schools (viz: "World English speakers").

While the majority of earlier immigrant students came from countries with relatively high literacy rates and strong educational programs, the more recent arrivals have a different educational profile. They are likely to have emigrated from countries facing political unrest or economic crisis, where they had limited opportunities for formal schooling. They arrive with substantial gaps in their formal education and limited literacy.

Schools in Prince George's County have incredible obstacles to overcome in meeting the needs of their diverse student populations. The linguistic and

cultural diversity that exists in the schools has prompted PGCPS to adopt a program which emphasizes English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), as opposed to a bilingual education program (although bilingual components -- bilingual tutors, dictionaries, materials, and the like -- are integrated into programs wherever the resources are available). Coupled with the wide range of ethnicities, languages, and cultural and educational backgrounds among these students is a high incidence of poverty, inter-ethnic conflict, and gang activity.

Project WE TEACH target populations

While Project WE TEACH addresses the needs of all immigrant students, this article focuses on the special needs and programs for two groups of bilingual immigrant students: (1) those with limited prior education and literacy and/or interrupted schooling, and (2) those who exhibit high academic achievement and potential but lack the support and encouragement to take challenging courses that will prepare them for college and/or the information and assistance they need to apply to college and to secure financial aid. What follows is a brief description of the key features of the two main components of the project, along with an overview of some of the challenges and accomplishments.

Underschooled Students

Jorge and Beverly are typical of the increasing numbers of foreign-born students entering American schools who come from countries where social, political, and economic upheavals have taken their toll. Internal struggles or wars have closed many schools, and economic pressures have left the remaining schools poorly-funded and under-staffed. These students are likely to have experienced violence, to have been separated from their family, to have lost family members, and to be living with a new family of strangers. Some may even find themselves living with a brother or sister, sharing the responsibilities of survival without the help of any adults. They may also be called upon to return to their countries to help family members or appear at important family events, interrupting their education once again (Crandall, Bernache, & Prager, in press; Hamayan, 1994; Minicucci & Olsen, 1992).

With limited prior education and literacy in their first language, these students face the challenge of acquiring English language and literacy at the same time they are trying to compensate for years of lost education. They need a substantial amount of time to develop academic literacy and skills equivalent to the number of years of "lost" schooling and exposure to standard American English. Among these students are World-English speakers from West Africa and the Caribbean, who pose a special challenge: many are fluent in an oral

variety of English, but have limited school experiences, and therefore, limited literacy in the particular variety of English spoken at the schools in their native countries (Crandall, 1995).

Critical Issues and Instructional Needs of Underschooled Immigrant Students

While "underschooled" students have undoubtedly been present in the schools for generations, their presence and their needs have been recognized only recently. In the past, these students were placed in beginning ESOL classes with students who were literate in their own languages, which presented problems for both groups of students as well as for the teacher. Today, there is recognition that in order to foster success among these students, the educational programs need to offer them access to the following:

1. A coherent, articulated sequence of courses which helps students transition from English language and literacy -- through academic concept and skills development -- into sheltered and mainstream classes.

2. Additional instructional time provided by after-school tutoring and summer school, where individual attention can be given and educational gaps can be filled. Underschooled students need a great deal of time in school and other educational programs to make up for their limited or interrupted formal education. They may require after-school tutoring, summer school programs, additional special courses, and/or additional semesters in high school beyond age 18.

3. Peer and cross-age tutoring by more academically advanced or older students (preferably students from the same places of origin who speak the same native languages) who can receive community service credit and improve their own skills as they are helping others. (If they are to be effective, however, they need adequate training and materials. Learning how to be a teacher is not something that should be left to chance).

4. Content-area instruction from teachers who are sensitive to these students and know appropriate strategies for helping them "catch up" on many years of interrupted education. Teachers need special training for working with underschooled immigrant students. Even the best-intentioned teachers can become frustrated in working with these students, especially when the students' own frustration erupts into inappropriate behavior or prolonged periods of absence. The techniques which are effective with these students are also likely to be effective with other students. Teachers also need to acknowledge the validity of multiple varieties of English spoken throughout the world and not treat them as

"bad English" as they are helping students acquire the standard academic English needed to succeed in American schools. (Crandall, Bernache, & Prager, in press; Hamayan, 1994; Stein, Nelson, & Bernache, 1991).

5. A concerted effort to address individual needs with many people brought into the instructional partnership. These include ESOL and other teachers, parents and other family members, administrators and counselors, and other students (especially others from the same country who have experienced similar difficulties). Classes need to be kept small, to permit individual attention. Graduate students in teacher education programs, especially those in ESOL/bilingual education, can help here. They are a valuable resource for underschooled students and can enrich their own learning in the process of helping them. Field observation and student teaching placements, internships, and volunteer tutoring enhance the education of both the underschooled immigrant and the preservice teacher.

6. Parental outreach and family support by way of classroom teachers communicating with parents through bilingual interpreters.

Project WE TEACH: Specialized courses and instructional strategies to develop academic Language and literacy skills

Aware of the importance of literacy and knowledge of academic language as a prerequisite for academic success, Project WE TEACH created a sequence of courses to address the language and literacy needs of underschooled immigrant students. What follows is a brief description and the sequence of specialized courses at PGCPS.

COURSE	STUDENT PROFILE
AIM 1	Non-literate English language learners with no formal education or interrupted education World English-speaking students with similar characteristics
AIM 2	Students who have completed AIM 1 World English speakers with some literacy and/or prior education Low-literacy English language learners with interrupted education
CABLE	Beginning or intermediate English language learners with native language literacy but limited prior education Students who have completed AIM 2 Literate World English speakers needing basic and study skills

Courses for Students

■ **Alternative Instructional Modes (AIM)** (Bernache, Bock, & Claus, 1993), a literacy course developed for middle school immigrant students with limited formal or interrupted education. The objective of AIM is to "teach basic skills in reading and writing via content area material, enabling students to improve their performance in the school environment and in the content area classes." Over time, these objectives have been expanded by AIM teachers to "build self-esteem and confidence," "improve organization and classroom socialization" skills, and "augment vocabulary and content knowledge" (Tate, 1997).

Through the efforts of a number of teachers, AIM has evolved into a highly-structured and predictable course which consists of a regular sequence of instructional events, beginning with a whole class warm-up in which the teacher ensures that students have appropriate materials and supplies, and ending with individual daily journal writing or a writers' workshop. The latter allows even beginning students the opportunity to become "published" authors and to acquire computer skills in the process. Also included are activities involving physical exercises and movement, which give students the opportunity to release bottled-up energy in an acceptable manner and encourage them to engage in more quiet forms of learning when they return to their seats.

To help students develop study skills, AIM requires all students to maintain a notebook, in which their classwork, homework, tests, and quizzes are organized into appropriate sections. The notebook augments the careful structure of the class itself, where students come to expect certain instructional activities and know what is required to participate in them. Because it can take more than a year for students to develop these basic literacy and academic skills, a second year of AIM (AIM 2) was developed (Bernache, Cherifi, & Pereira).

■ Cognitive Academic-Based Language Experience (CABLE) (Christianakis, Claus, Hansen, & Nahmani, 1996). CABLE was developed for high school students who have some formal schooling and literacy but lack the "academic English" and skills required for "academic" content areas. It offers high school students with limited prior education the opportunity to become more familiar with the academic English associated with mathematics, science, and social studies.

English-as-a-second-language program (ESOL)

In PGCPS special courses, as mentioned above, are offered concurrently with a sequence of ESOL classes (from beginning through intermediate English proficiency levels). A main feature of the ESOL program is the provision of sheltered English instruction.

■ **Sheltered English:** Sheltered English instruction allows students to receive subject matter instruction in English, modified so that is accessible to them at their levels of English proficiency. In this model, every lesson in any given school subject becomes, in part, a language lesson. Vocabulary and language skills are taught in tandem with relevant concepts. Sheltered English is needed for all subject area courses. It particularly is useful in mathematics, since many of these students are struggling with addition and subtraction while their peers are working on fractions or beginning algebra.

Support Programs

■ **Summer Program:** Summer school provides extra instructional time and more individual attention. It also helps to prevent the erosion of English language literacy and academic skills -- which routinely occurs when students have no instructional summer program. The summer school programs have focused on literature, computer keyboarding, math, social studies, and English, and focus some attention on the functional tests required for graduation (i.e., reading, writing, mathematics, and citizenship).

■ **Parental Involvement Activities:** A number of activities enhance the participation of parents and other family members. At one middle school, parents and their children participated in Saturday workshops focusing on basic math skills. Bilingual interpreters were used to contact parents and to update them on their children's progress. It was through these conferences that Jorge's parents were made aware of his brother's negative influence on him, and guidance was provided for ways in which the parents could encourage Jorge during this difficult time and keep him in school, though the parents had considered sending him back to El Salvador.

Teacher training

■ In all academic areas, it is important to identify teachers who are particularly suited to working with underschooled students and to empower them with strategies to teach these students more effectively. Especially useful to teachers were graduate level courses on "Strategies and Techniques for Working with Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Secondary School Students" and "World Englishes and their Speakers," which focus on students with limited prior education and literacy. Perhaps most important of the activities in the "World Englishes" course was the semester-long case study in which each teacher worked individually with one World English-speaking student. In both courses, the teachers observed each other's classes as well as the classes of colleagues in neighboring districts as part of their coursework (Crandall, 1994, 1995).

Through this project and other related efforts, we have begun to identify and address the special needs of the underschooled students. It is constantly a challenge, however, to ensure that the appropriate courses are available for all students; that these courses and ESOL programs are taught by trained and supportive teachers; and that support services are available and parental involvement activities are encouraged.

High-Achieving Students: "Oh my God! I made it!"

As Hadlock (1994) recalls, "Throughout my first two years of teaching ESOL, I have met many highly intelligent and highly motivated students. When asked, almost every student in my ESOL class has said that he or she had dreams of attending college." Unfortunately, however, many of these students have little understanding of *how* to achieve the goal of attending college. A number of factors conspire against college participation by immigrant students, even those with substantial prior education and literacy in their own languages. Even outstanding students, like Luisa or Elena, whose high GPAs and leadership skills make them role models to other students, find themselves thinking they are going to college, but do nothing in the interim to make that a reality.

Navigating the college application and financial aid process may appear overwhelming even to an American student supported by college-educated parents, but it may seem *insurmountable* for an immigrant student who is the first in the family to consider college. These students usually do not understand that it is possible for them to attend college and work at the same time -- so that they can continue to provide for their families. Many believe that college is not an option because, in many countries, only a small elite participates in higher education, and opportunities are restricted for women. Immigrant students are often not aware of the diversity of colleges available or the range of careers they could have. They are also likely to be intimidated by the standardized tests they must take before they can apply to college, such as the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and the American College Test (ACT). Fear of failure on these tests can cause students to engage in actions which make failure a self-fulfilling prophecy: they may avoid studying, berate themselves for poor performance ("You see, I knew I was stupid!" cited in Hadlock, 1994), or even miss the testing sessions. These students may not be considered college-bound by their school, and hence, may not have access to school programs for the college-bound. They may also lack the self-esteem and confidence to think seriously about college as a postsecondary option. Finally, students may not be involved in school or after-school activities which could enhance their motivation to continue studying and make them better candidates for acceptance by colleges (Hadlock, 1994; Hutner, 1994).

Unfortunately, many schools lack a structure to adequately inform, counsel, and mentor even the most motivated and high-achieving immigrant students in their pursuit of higher education. Counselors find their time consumed by scheduling and discipline, often using any remaining time they have to help college-bound native English speakers. Immigrant students are too often left to fend for themselves. Unless a special support system is developed for these students, they will continue to be shut out from college opportunities.

Developing a Support Structure for College-Bound Immigrant Students

The following are some of the strategies project WE TEACH used for developing such a support system:

- Incorporate career and college information into the ESOL and English classes;
- Create a mentoring club, such as the International Honors Council (described below);
- Provide financial aid workshops with interpreters for parents and students;
- Develop a program of speakers and field trips which increases students' awareness of the range of career and college possibilities, highlights the benefits of bilingualism, and provides role models for bilingual students;
- Help students understand the particular standardized tests that will be required by colleges and universities they may want to attend, such as SAT, ACT and TOEFL (Bunch, 1995);
- Provide classes which focus on the wide range of required college entrance examinations, helping students to understand and be successful in taking what may be their first standardized tests;
- Implement college preparation classes which integrate many of these activities and help students develop both the confidence and the skills that will lead to college success;
- Encourage students to participate in peer-tutoring and cross-age tutoring of immigrant and other students to develop self-confidence (and also, consider teaching as a career);
- Encourage enrollment in advanced placement, talented and gifted, and other college preparation classes. This includes advocating for these students and helping the mainstream content teacher develop appropriate strategies for teaching diverse student populations in the same classroom. Additionally, these

are important because some students who score low on the SAT and TOEFL do very well on the AP exams, providing colleges with another indicator of their motivation and ability; and

- Bring former students back as speakers and role models.

(Adapted from Chiancone & Maxwell, 1997)

Over time, to help ensure the continuation of these initiatives, efforts should be undertaken to convert them from after-school or extracurricular activities to courses within the regular school curriculum.

Empowering College-Bound Immigrant Students: The International (Honors) Council

Perhaps the most innovative and effective initiative we have developed has been the International (Honors) Council: "a workshop-style after-school club designed to help students from immigrant families learn how to negotiate entrance into the post-secondary educational system in the United States" (Chiancone & Maxwell, 1997). Begun at Northwestern High School, the target population for this Council initially was high-achieving immigrant students who might not consider college attendance without teacher guidance, but over time, the population has expanded to include average students like Gabriel. Council activities are focused on career options, the college search, the college application process, the financial aid application process, and decision-making.

International (Honors) Council Goal

What follows is a list of the International Council goals:

- Expose immigrant students to the variety of postsecondary educational options available to them;
- Mentor high-achieving, college-bound, immigrant secondary school students to help them set future education and career goals;
- Provide a weekly, workshop-style atmosphere for students to complete the necessary steps in the college application process;
- Tutor students in writing application letters, essays, and resumes (including, if necessary, teaching keyboarding skills);
- Provide sources of self-esteem and image-building for students as they plan their futures; and
- Assist immigrant students in identifying and accessing sources of financial assistance.

Positive outcomes of the International Council

With the help of the Council and other activities, Elena was able to reconsider her options and to return to her original dream of becoming a certified teacher. After taking the necessary tests and completing the various application forms, she was offered a $12,000 scholarship at a small college with a very good teacher education program and is currently a sophomore, maintaining a "B" average, and well on her way to becoming a much-needed bilingual teacher.

Gabriel was able to begin the process of fulfilling his mother's and his own expectations when he learned that a federally-funded loan could cover most of his college expenses and that a local community college would be an appropriate place to begin that process. Later he could consider transferring to a four-year university.

During its first year, all 27 students who participated in the Council were accepted at colleges, with many receiving full-tuition scholarships. That pattern has persisted in succeeding years, and a collaboration has evolved between a small, women's liberal arts college and one of the project's high schools. Former Council members have become mentors to incoming college freshmen; together they have formed a support group and community which sustains students during the transition. (An ethnographic study of that community is currently underway.) As Honey Morales, who is just beginning her junior year in college, said during this presentation, "...it's just one of those things that you never thought you would achieve and once you're here it's like -- oh my God, I made it! I'm a junior, and that's incredible! And being Latina, that means a lot, because I feel like I already have two strikes against me, because I'm a woman and I'm Latina. But that's OK, because once you hit that line and you have the knowledge, you'll be great!" Honey has helped start a Latina Club at the women's college and is spending her junior year in Nicaragua, (where she was born), as part of a process of self-knowledge and self-realization.

As another student explained, "The council helped a lot. They helped us to write resumes and essays. They helped us with the applications, taking TOEFL tests, and visiting campuses, and [by] asking us where we want to go and what kind of a decision we want to make and if we want to go to college. A lot of students in the Council, before they came to the Council, didn't want to go to college because they didn't think they were going to make it. They were worried about grades and whether they would survive in college or financially. All of that, and also the lack of access to information . . . We have learned a whole lot and benefitted a whole lot, too."

This council has been adapted by Bladensburg High School and numerous school districts around the country have requested information and copies of the manuals by Hadlock and Hutner. At both Northwestern and Bladensburg High Schools, many of the council activities have been institutionalized into elective college preparatory courses for juniors and seniors, which now allow teachers to provide more in-depth and individualized assistance than was previously possible. The Council also continues as an after-school workshop, helping provide additional support to these students and assistance to students who are unable to enroll in the college preparatory courses. It has also evolved into two separate councils: one for underclassmen, focusing on college/career options and course/testing requirements; and a senior-level council, where the application process becomes the primary focus. The junior council provides the structure for involving the students early enough to ensure success.

The Remaining Challenge

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing schools attempting to better serve these students is time. It takes incredible energy and time to develop appropriate programs and to provide adequate guidance and support. To expect teachers to add this to their already over-burdened day seems unfair. However, teachers can and will do this, if they are provided with the opportunity to improve their schools and if they can receive support from both their school and outside sources (for example, from teacher education programs). As one teacher put it, "Mellon has invigorated the school and given focus for students and staff. The reason is [the] project is doing, not discussing!" Working together to address common problems, moreover, helps build a sense of purpose, "a sense of community, and a sense of belonging" which enables all to "hang tough in these circumstances." Over time, with persistence, many of the after-school activities can be integrated into the regular curriculum, and even summer school can become a regular part of the program for these students. This process becomes easier over time, as accumulated wisdom is conveyed through curriculum, manuals, and mentoring relationships. Each success further empowers teachers and students alike and makes it more feasible to teach all students and have appropriately high expectations for them as well.

For more information about Project WE TEACH or the initiatives discussed in this article, consult the materials listed in the references or write to either of the two authors.

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Chapter 4

Focus on Assessment: Critical Issues Affecting the Educational Success of Language Minority Students

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The Culture of Educational Assessment

I would like to frame my discussion on assessment as a critical issue affecting the educational success of language minority students within the context that characterizes much of educational assessment these days[1]. We need to remind ourselves that, despite researchers' and educators' warnings against the use of single indicators of performance in academic achievement, most high-stakes decisions in education are still being made on the basis of single test scores typically obtained from standardized norm-referenced tests. We also need to be aware of the culture of testing that seems to dominate our educational systems: the need to portray students quantitatively, to place them into designated "programs" of instruction as a result of testing, and to categorize them as one or another type of learner is pervasive in a way that does not always benefit the learner (Damico & Hamayan, 1990; Meisels, 1993a). Add to this backdrop a paradigm that places the burden of learning primarily on the student, and you have educational environments that are driven by the obsession to elicit student scores as a gauge of learning.

Although policymakers generally continue to function under this single-referenced, standardized-test approach to assessment, opposing evidence is quite solid (Hamayan, 1995; Wiggins, 1989). We have ample evidence that representing learners on the basis of single-referenced standardized scores is akin to looking through a key hole to figure out what is happening behind the closed door! Heavy reliance on formal standardized test scores for educational decisions is dubious for any learner. However, it is particularly questionable for students who come from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Lack of full proficiency in the language of instruction and sometimes in the language of assessment is a confounding factor that will interfere with obtaining valid and reliable information no matter how sophisticated the assessment procedures are: in most contexts, a concept cannot be assessed separately from the language that represents it.

Heavy reliance on formal standardized test scores is also dubious for any academic content area, but particularly so in an area such as language learning, where mastery amounts to more than the acquisition of knowledge. Because of the broad range of behaviors and functions associated with bilingual proficiency, performance assessment rather than paper-and-pencil testing would have to be used. Also, because of the complexity of language use, performance assessment would have to entail a variety of assessment methods in a variety of contexts.

[1] This article has been adapted from Donato, 1997

Despite the findings mentioned, we still find many schools and state educational agencies making their decisions on the basis of single isolated scores. Because no single measure or test is capable of providing a profile of achievement and proficiency, the common assertion to assess linguistically and culturally diverse learners through multiple perspectives is not only appropriate but is urgent, and it needs to be taken to heart by the individuals who make large-scale policy decisions or those who make crucial decisions about individual students.

In addition to leading to educational decisions that are potentially counter-productive for the learner, the pressure to show accountability through performance on standardized tests also has the particularly dangerous outcome of changing our understanding of the nature of learning and achievement (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1993). The view of language learning that we would get from a standardized norm-referenced definition is one that conceptualizes language as consisting of discrete rules, sounds, and words. It would lead us to think that language is learned in little chunks, that do not necessarily carry much meaning. The effect of changing our view of the language learning process to conform to these standardized norm-referenced perspectives of assessment is bound to be devastating. It would take us back to creating classroom environments that are simply not conducive to developing proficiency in a second language or, more importantly, to the acquisition of knowledge in academic content areas.

It is essential, then, to explore the use of alternatives to this standardized norm-referenced approach to assessment of language minority students if we take to heart the importance of representing students in a way that will be most beneficial to them as learners, rather than in a way that is most efficient for the school system.

Models of Alternative Assessment

Alternatives to standardized norm-referenced testing are effective because of the following characteristics: proximity of the assessment to actual language use and performance, a holistic view of language, and an integrative view of learning. Additionally, alternative assessment strives to be developmentally appropriate and typically incorporates more than one reference (Hamayan, 1995). It is often classroom-based and it allows the teacher to obtain information not only about the students but also about the instructional activities themselves (Genesee & Hamayan, 1994).

Many models that approach assessment from a non-standardized testing perspective have been suggested in the literature, but it may be beneficial for

people in language education to turn to a sector of the educational field where the use of standardized tests is especially fraught with difficulties: early childhood education. Models of authentic assessment of young children's growth and achievement that capture the performance of children in social, emotional, physical, and academic domains can prove to be quite useful to the bilingual educator. Meisels' (1993b) Work Sampling System, for example, is an ongoing evaluation process that reflects the goals and objectives of the teacher while keeping track of children's progress. It may provide us with a model suitable for adaptation to learning contexts for linguistically and culturally diverse students. The system consists of three complementary components: (a) developmental checklists, (b) portfolios, and (c) summary reports. All these components are classroom-focused, and they use instruction as a context (Meisels, 1993b). The system is open-ended enough to allow for local contextualization but includes the necessary formality to accommodate reliability issues.

The Knowledge Base Necessary for Alternative Assessment

Performance assessment procedures such as the Work Sampling System allow us to document what students know and can do based on activities in which they routinely engage in the classroom. However, in order to adapt a model such as the Work Sampling System, or, for that matter, any alternative to standardized testing, we must have a clear understanding of the knowledge base that defines language proficiency and academic achievement. I believe that we cannot form this knowledge base without drawing heavily on our knowledge of first and second language acquisition; yet, even with the knowledge of how languages develop and grow and how children learn, the task of clarifying what children should be able to do as a result of instruction is muddied by the enormous variety in characteristics of linguistically and culturally diverse students and, more importantly, in the instructional environments created for them.

This problem is especially aggravated for an academic area such as English as a second language. Unlike achievement in academic content areas for monolingual English-speaking students, where the expectations are rather clear as to what students should be able to do at different levels of instruction, second language education in the United States suffers from incongruence of expected outcomes, or for some students, a lack of expected outcomes. What can we expect of a student who enters an American school at the age of 13 having a total of two years of formal schooling in her life? What can we expect of a student who comes to school at the age of eight speaking both English and the native

language but neither at the expected level of complexity that you would expect from an eight-year old? What can we expect of a student who enters school at kindergarten with the full array of language skills in her native language and very little or no proficiency in English?

Because of this lack of a fundamental knowledge base, it is inconceivable that assessment can be completed in any way independently of the instructional context (Genesee & Hamayan, 1994). What a linguistically and culturally diverse student who is not fully proficient in the language of instruction is able to do as a result of instruction will not only depend quite heavily on the type and extent of instruction given in that language, but also must be interpreted within the context of that instruction. Since the type of learning environment created for linguistically and culturally diverse students differs radically from school to school (or even from classroom to classroom), the assessment has to be grounded in the classroom and instructional domains. Planning for assessment then becomes a crucial phase in the gathering of information. Questions such as "What is the purpose of the assessment?" and "Who will use the results of assessment?" must be clearly laid out prior to beginning the assessment process. Once these questions have been clarified, and only then, can the remaining assessment issues -- what to assess, when to assess and how to record information -- be determined (Genesee & Hamayan, 1994).

To help us with our expectations of students who are learning English as a second language (ESL), we may take some guidance from the growing body of standards that have been established for several academic domains. Of particular value are the ESL standards for Pre-K-12 students developed by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL, 1997), as well as the assessment guidelines that TESOL is currently working on. These standards specify what students are expected to do as a result of instruction in English as a second language. They specify three general goals for students: (1) using English to communicate in social settings, (2) using English to achieve academically in all content areas, and (3) using English to function successfully in diverse cultural environments. Rather than imposing boundaries on what teachers do in the classroom, as standards in many other content areas are apt to do, these standards should serve as no more than general guidelines for proficiency expectations. They can help define the general communicative abilities that characterize different levels of language proficiency in social and academic settings for students who are learning English as a second language. But, without a clear statement of the purpose of the assessment, those guidelines would be meaningless, hence the need for contextualizing the assessment.

Assessment as Advocacy

It is difficult to discuss issues of assessment of linguistically and culturally diverse students without bringing up the role of advocacy. As long as what we do is governed by the paradigm that places the burden of learning primarily on the student; as long as there are enormous inequities among communities in the access to a decent education; and as long as there are linguistically and culturally diverse students in the sector of society deemed undeserving of the best that education can offer -- that is, the poorer sectors of society -- advocacy and assessment must go hand in hand. The questions we need to pose must push the case for interpreting assessment results within the context of the learning environment that has been created for those students. A student's score on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills cannot be looked at without noting the fact that several days of the month a given student cannot cross the street to get to the school because members of the rival gang control that street! A score on a test cannot be interpreted without noting that the teacher does not have access to a copy machine which she would use to copy a newspaper article that she wants to relate to Romeo and Juliet, the play the class has been reading that month!

Our discussions of assessment issues must include questions of equity and access to quality educational experiences for language minority students. We must push for a contextualized assessment that interprets student performance in the context of access to a positive learning environment; access to appropriate curriculum; access to full delivery of services; and access to equitable assessment (TESOL, 1997). Without that context of interpretation, the damage to the learners and the communities they come from would be enormous.

Recommended Policies and Practices

The following recommendations and suggestions emerge from the issues discussed above:

First, the first point of discussion is neither a recommendation for a policy nor a suggestion for practice. It is a plea to change the general perspective pervading in education that puts the responsibility of learning primarily on the student. Instead, we must adopt the stance in education that learning is a complex phenomenon resulting from the interaction of the learner, his or her family, the teacher, the larger society that hosts these players, the classroom environment, the instructional strategies used, and the material being learned. We must move from a perspective that allows us to assess learning only by assessing the learner to one that forces us to consider the learning environment. We cannot continue to fool ourselves into thinking that the interpretation of assessment results

based solely on learner performance has much validity. We must begin to interpret student assessment results in light of the unique characteristics that define language minority students as well as the learning environment that surrounds them. Concomitantly, results from assessment should be used not only to evaluate the student but also to enhance instruction and the classroom environment in general.

Second, important educational decisions should not be made on the basis of a single score, especially if that score was obtained from a formal, standardized, norm-referenced test. Placement into programs, graduation from programs, and other such decisions should be made on the basis of a multireferenced array of information sources, where a standardized score provides but one piece of information about the student. Judgments made by different teachers who work with the student should be incorporated into these decisions, and generally, teacher observations should be given the attention they deserve. Teachers should begin to see themselves as assessors and as holders of vital information about their students.

Third, individual schools should establish formal and structured ways of quantifying qualitative information that is typically found in portfolios. This is likely to entail a long-term research project to be undertaken by individual schools that will eventually lead to a formula that assigns a different weight to standardized scores, teacher ratings, self evaluations (for older learners), and any other information the school deems important. Decisions made on the basis of that multireferenced formula are likely to have higher predictive power than single scores.

Fourth, regardless of the complexity of the assessment process, and regardless of how difficult it might be to assess language minority students, school districts must develop systems of accountability that fully incorporate linguistically and culturally diverse students (August, Hakuta & Pompa, 1994). Even if it is not appropriate for students to be assessed in English, and even if no native language assessment procedures are available, schools should have alternative ways of ensuring that these students are being given the best opportunities to achieve the standards set forth for the rest of the student body.

Fifth, with the TESOL standards being used as guidelines, longitudinal data need to be gathered as to what language proficiency levels and skills can be expected from different types of students in different types of instructional programs. We now have a general idea as to what achievement pattern to expect from students in different types of programs (Collier, 1995), but we still do not

have a clear sense of what specific language proficiency levels to expect from students entering school at different ages, and with different native language backgrounds.

Finally, assessment should be planned, administered, and most importantly, interpreted in the context of equity. Questions of equity in the assessment process, as well as questions regarding students' access to an equitable and quality educational environment, should be asked. Regarding access to equitable assessment, the following questions must be addressed (TESOL, 1997):

- Are language minority students subject to broadly based methods of assessing language and academic achievement in the content areas that are appropriate to the students' developmental level, age, and level of oral and written language proficiency in the first and second languages?
- Are assessment measures nonbiased and relevant?
- Are assessment results explained to the community from which the student comes in the language which that community uses?
- Do language minority students have access to broadly based and equitable methods of assessing special needs?

Without reference to opportunity to learn, assessment results simply cannot have the validity that we have bestowed on them.

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Chapter 5

Promising Assessment Practices for Language Minority Students: State and Local Perspectives

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Broadening the Scope of Educational Assessment

Assessment systems are analogous to mosaics. Each component of the mosaic offers a valuable piece of information in and of itself, yet when amassed with the other components, yields a stronger and richer whole. Multiple data sources, representing distinct assessment methods and documentation forms collected over varying points in time, serve as confirmatory evidence of student performance. Ultimately, the comprehensiveness of the endeavor allows for greater confidence in and better utilization of assessment results.

How assessment data are collected and reported often carry high stakes. In the case of language minority students, assessment scores can determine their placement into educational programs, their receipt of instructional services, their reclassification status, and their requirements for high school graduation (Rivera & Vincent, in press). More often than not, large-scale assessments designed for the general student population are administered to language minority students through accommodations (Olson & Goldstein, 1997; Roeber, Bond, & Braskamp, 1997). To the extent that assessments serve as gatekeepers, language minority students should be assessed by a fair and equitable system that is sensitive to and reflective of their unique characteristics.

This paper describes two such systems that exemplify promising assessment practices specifically developed for language minority students. The first, three differing types of ESL/bilingual assessment, is a statewide initiative. The second example, an assessment portfolio, is an urban, school-based project. These distinct levels of implementation demonstrate how assessment systems can operate across varying contexts.

A State Perspective: A System Built on Interrelated Assessments

States continue to explore the use of the students' native language in large-scale assessment (Dalton & Hargett, 1997). Illinois' 125,000 students who are served by more than 250 state approved bilingual and ESL programs, speak 97 native languages (ISBE, 1997). Approximately 80% are Latino and speak Spanish.

In 1997, Illinois launched a series of innovative assessments targeted specifically for its language minority students who historically have been excluded from the state's assessment program. The regulatory basis for this initiative was borne from the same legislation that created the state's assessment program. Students in a state approved bilingual education program were initially exempted from the state assessment their first year in an Illinois school. In 1993, school reform

legislation was amended, extending the exemption period up to three years while concomitantly subsuming ESL/bilingual education under the state's accountability umbrella. Time in an Illinois ESL/bilingual education program, not a student's language proficiency, remained the criterion used for eligibility and participation.

In contemplating how to create fair and equitable assessments for Illinois' diverse student population, the issue of which language to use was much debated. Ultimately, it was decided that the tremendous variability within ESL/bilingual education services precluded the state from developing assessments in the students' native languages. Despite the enormous range in student characteristics, the discrepancy in the amount of native language support, and the vast array of district policies and practices, educators indeed agreed that one goal for all students was to acquire English language proficiency.

As part of the legislative package, the State Superintendent of Education established a State Task Force for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Student Alternative Assessment which deliberated a year prior to submitting a set of recommendations for approval by the Illinois State Board of Education. In its 1994 report, the committee specified how the assessment system was to be crafted for the state's LEP student population. A set of principles defined the parameters of the system, stipulating that, overall, the assessments must:

Be consistent with student needs and aligned with state and local standards;

Accommodate each student's previous academic experience in English and the native language;

Include measures of English language proficiency and academic achievement that are reliable, valid, and culturally fair;

Reflect the existing diversity of instructional approaches in bilingual education programs;

Provide schools with the necessary data to determine when a student should participate in the state assessment; and

Be supported at the state and local levels through training, professional development, and evaluation.

Subsequently, over the next two years, the Bilingual Assessment Advisory Panel operationalized the recommendations of the Task Force by conceptualizing the three products that comprise the assessment system. This undertaking was a collaborative and coordinated effort on the part of parents, teachers, administrators, and state board personnel.

The Illinois assessment system for ESL/bilingual students has state and local responsibilities. The state ensures reliable and valid measurement of English language literacy (reading and writing) through the administration of the *Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English* (IMAGE). Individual school districts are entrusted with the assessment of these students' oral language proficiency (listening and speaking) and academic achievement (in science, social science, and mathematics), reflecting the language(s) of instruction. The *Language Proficiency Handbook and the Content-Based Exemplars,* two other pieces of the mosaic serve to facilitate this process. The mosaic that emerges offers a broadened scope of assessment practices available to teachers and administrators. What follows is a brief description of each of the assessments.

The *Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English* (IMAGE)

The IMAGE (Illinois State Board of Education, 1997) is the state's standardized language proficiency measure in reading and writing. It is intended for students in grades 3-11 who have participated in state approved ESL/bilingual education programs from six months through three years. There are three secure forms developed annually that correspond to grade levels 3-5, 6-8, and 9-11 respectively. Administration occurs during the same time frame as the state's other assessment program in order to enhance student unity as well as to minimize disruption. Data, collected longitudinally on students' literacy development, are aggregated and reported at the student, the school, the district level, and the state levels.

Features of the IMAGE

Guiding the development of the IMAGE, as well as the other measures in the assessment system, is the acknowledgment of the students' linguistic, cultural, developmental, and experiential diversity. The wide range in students' language proficiency and achievement (both in their first and second languages), ethnicity, age, and educational continuity underlie the creation of these multilevel assessments. To accommodate such variation, the conceptual framework for the IMAGE encompasses four domains (vocabulary, use of visual support, passage length and complexity, and reasoning) across social and academic contexts. The amount of visual support, for example, is generally inverse to passage length and complexity. In the initial reading and writing task, information is gained from a full page graphic. In the subsequent tasks, more text is gradually introduced with diminishing visual support, until meaning is gleaned entirely from narrative and expository text.

Additionally, the IMAGE is unique in that:

- The measure is thematic, based on multicultural and experiential knowledge

of language minority students. For both reading and direct writing, two themes are realized through a series of four scaffolded tasks. Information (both visual and print) from one task is built upon in the subsequent tasks, maximizing cohesion and continuity for students.

■ Extensive graphics are used, such as photographs, line art, and charts, to provide visual support for the printed material and to offer students multiple avenues for constructing meaning.

■ The test format replicates that of the state's reading and writing assessment, enabling language minority students to practice and acquire test-taking strategies. In reading, there is a progression of linguistic complexity within and across items which enables students of varying proficiency levels to be successful. In writing, the focused analytic rubric for the IMAGE interfaces with the one designed for native English speakers. In that way, ESL, bilingual, and classroom teachers alike gain insight into the relationship among the major components of writing.

■ Students are expected to engage in critical thinking; inferential questions constitute about half of the reading portion. Within each task, there are concrete contextualized cues as well as abstract decontextualized ones.

■ The content is challenging, interesting, and developmentally appropriate for all language minority students, including those with special needs.

The IMAGE Writing Summary Rubric, a 26 cell matrix (see page 76) highlights some of the key features described above. Designed by Illinois educators, it dovetails the one developed for the state's direct writing assessment by adopting three of the five components (Focus, Organization, and Support/Elaboration). A fourth component, Mechanics, has been modified and the fifth component, Language Production, has been especially crafted for second language learners to document the second language acquisition process. The rubric has been shared with teachers throughout the state and is incorporated into each of Illinois' assessment products for ESL/bilingual students.

Currently, the state is embarking on developing performance standards for its fundamental learning areas. English as a Second Language (ESL) standards are being formulated by individual districts, not the state. Student work is being gathered through state committees that exemplify the 1997 Illinois Learning Standards. The alignment of assessment with curriculum and instruction is a central tenet of that effort. The present work is intended to be inclusive for all students with strong representation from the bilingual and special education communities. Eventually, performance indicators for the IMAGE will reflect the developmental pathways to state reading and writing standards.

Image Writing Summary Rubric

Language Production - Degree to which English language acquisition is demonstrated in writing.

1	2	3	4	5	6
• 1-2 word labels • Word lists	• Short, simple sentences or phrases attempted	• Simple sentences; some expanded sentences may be attempted	• Expanded sentences; complex structures attempted	• Variety of sentence lengths and structures attempted	• Variety of sentence lengths and structures used
	• Limited or repetitive sentence patterns attempted	• Limited or repetitive sentence patterns produced	• Variety of sentence patterns attempted	• Sentence patterns are appropriate for task	• Sentence patterns are appropriate for task
	• Frequent word order errors • Limited use of accurate grammar	• Some word order errors • Some use of accurate grammar	• Occasional word order errors • Inconsistent use of accurate grammar	• Infrequent word order errors • Predominant use of accurate grammar	• Infrequent word order errors • Consistent use of accurate grammar
		• Frequent substitutions and omissions of words • Word choice predominantly nonspecific and/or repetitious	• Some substitutions and omissions of words • Appropriate use of high frequency and limited use of topic-specific vocabulary	• Infrequent substitutions and omissions of words • Inconsistent use of idiomatic expressions or specific/technical vocabulary	• Infrequent substitutions and omissions of words • Appropriate use of idiomatic expressions or specific/technical vocabulary
	• Meaning may not be easily understood	• Some meaning may be obscured	• Overall meaning minimally obscured	• Overall meaning clearly communicated	• Overall meaning clearly communicated
• Some words from the native language may be present	• Some words from the native language may be present	• Some words from the native language may be present	• Predominant presence of second-language learner indicators	• Some presence of second-language-learner indicators	• Minimal presence of second-language-learner indicators

Focus -- Degree to which main idea/theme or point of view is clear and maintained.

1	2	3	4	5	6
• Absent; unclear; insufficient writing to ascertain maintenance	• Attempted; subject unclear or confusing; main point unclear or shifts; resembles brainstorming; insufficient writing to sustain issue • Multiple list without umbrella	• Subject clear/position is not; "underpromise, overdeliver;" "overpromise, underdeliver;" infer, two or more positions without unifying statement; abrupt ending • Multiple list without umbrella • Drift • Overall, unifying idea can be inferred	• Bare bones; position clear; main point(s) clear and maintained; prompt dependent; launch into support w/o preview • Narrative event clear • Reactions present may be unstated • May end abruptly • Overall, unifying idea stated	• Position announced; points generally previewed; has a closing • Narrative event clear • Reactions stated may be uneven and/or general	• All main points are specified and maintained; effective closing • Narrative event clear • Reactions more specific

Support/Elaboration -- Degree to which main point/elements are elaborated and/or explained by specific evidence and detailed reasons.

1	2	3	4	5	6
• No support; insufficient writing • Little or no elaboration • Confusing	• Support attempted; ambiguous/confusing; unrelated list; insufficient writing	• Some points elaborated; most genera/some questionable; may be a list of related specifics; sufficiency? • General elaboration	• Some second-order elaboration; some are general; sufficiency ok -- not much depth • Mix of general and specific elaboration	• Most points elaborated by second-order or more • Elaboration is specific • Some depth • Most major elements supported	• All major points elaborated with specific second-order support; balance/evenness • All major elements supported • Greater depth

Organization -- Degree to which logical flow of ideas and text plan are clear and connected

1	2	3	4	5	6
• No plan; insufficient writing to ascertain maintenance • Ideas not related	• Attempted; plan can be inferred; no evidence of paragraphing; confusion prevails; • Structure hard to infer	• Plan noticeable; inappropriate paragraphing; major digressions; sufficiency? • Some evidence of structure	• Plan is evident; minor digressions; some cohesion and coherence from relating to topic • Narrative structure is evident	• Plan is clear; most points logically connected; coherence and cohesion demonstrated; most points appropriately paragraphed • Generally strong paragraphs	• All points logically connected and signaled with transitions and/or other cohesive devices; all appropriately paragraphed; no digressions • Strong paragraphs • More than 1 sentence in opening & closing paragraphs

Mechanics -- Use of conventions of standard English. (spelling, capitalization, and punctuation)

1	2	3	4	5	6
• Many errors, cannot read; insufficient writing to ascertain maintenance	• Many major errors; confusion; insufficient writing	• Some major errors, many minor	• Minimally developed; few major errors, some minor, but meaning unimpaired	• A few minor errors, but no more than one major error	• No major errors, few or no minor errors

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The Language Proficiency Handbook: A Practitioner's Guide to Instructional Assessment

The *Handbook* (in press) is built around a series of rubrics, or scoring guides, in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These forms for documenting assessment, with their defined criteria, accompany performance tasks. They are intended for language classrooms, including ESL, bilingual, dual language, and modern ("foreign") language settings. The primary audience is teachers and there is applicability for students throughout their schooling, from pre-kindergarten through high school.

With ongoing professional development, reliable and valid results can be extended from classrooms to programs, schools, and districts. Individual teachers have the option of incorporating some of the ideas and procedures into their instructional repertoire. Programs have the discretion of selecting several rubrics to systematically monitor students' language proficiency throughout the year. District curriculum committees may create projects that utilize a specific rubric (such as the Stages of Language Acquisition or the Composition Profile) to assess the students' oral or written language use.

Several promising assessment practices are incorporated into the *Handbook*. The first is that information is gained from multiple sources through the employment of self, peer, and teacher assessment. This practice reflects the belief that in student centered assessment, students have a voice in determining what they learn and how they learn (Gottlieb, in press; O'Malley and Pierce, 1996). Second, samples of student work are presented, along with their corresponding analyses, based on the criteria specified in the rubric. As the rubrics have been matched with Illinois' English language arts and advisory foreign language learning standards, these samples may be used as benchmarks for teachers in assigning performance levels.

Next, student and classroom charts provide a means of summarizing and managing assessment information by instructional cycle (such as a semester), enabling teachers to see at a glance student gains in language proficiency. Finally, the IMAGE writing summary rubric and a local reading rubric are included to facilitate classroom connections between state and local assessment and to ensure that teachers are exposed to and have access to sound literacy criteria for language minority and majority students. This crossover promotes articulation among teachers and between teachers and administrators. An example of a student self-assessment writing summary rubric is presented on page 78.

Student Self-Assessment for the IMAGE Writing Summary Rubric:
A Reflective Narrative

Student _____ Date _____

Class _____ Grade _____

Name of Piece _____

Language Production

Describe how you put your thoughts into words. Tell about the kinds of sentences you used and how you chose your words.

Focus

Summarize your main idea or point of view.

Support/Elaboration

Point out the evidence or details you used to explain your main idea or point of view.

Organization

Describe or show the plan you used for prewriting and writing.

Mechanics

Explain what you did (such as use a bilingual dictionary, spell check on a computer, or ask a friend) to make sure your spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are correct.

Overall Writing

Tell how this piece helped you grow as a writer.

The rubrics provide a common format and uniform set of descriptors for interpreting student performance. Consistency of interpretation enhances the reliability of the assessment. The usefulness of the rubrics extend across instructional settings (including multi-age, resource, team teaching, or self-contained classrooms) and grouping patterns (such as whole group, small group, triads, or pairs) of students. Thus, classrooms, programs, schools and districts have opportunities to craft assessment systems reflective of their student populations that will yield useful and meaningful results. The *Handbook* can guide educators to the creation and delivery of sound instructional and assessment practices within that system.

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The Illinois Content-based Exemplars

The *Exemplars* (ISBE, 1997), designed for language minority and majority students, are instructional assessment units of study, four to six week duration, that focus on social science issues. There is a theme for each of three developmental clusters (K-2; 3-5; 6-12) and teachers have latitude in their implementation. These prototypes serve as examples of educational best practices in and of themselves or as replicable models for curriculum development. An example of one of the rubrics included in the Illinois State Board of Education content-based exemplars is presented on page 80.

As part of the assessment system, the promising practices of the *Exemplars* reinforce those of the other two components. In this instance, there is alignment of the state's social science learning standards with the learning concepts for the unit. Self and peer assessment recognizes the importance of the student as a stakeholder in the learning process. Formative and summative assessment allows students and teachers to move from task specific rubrics to the generalized criteria of a state developed social science rubric.

What is innovative about the *Exemplars* is that the themes are truly integrated; there is a blending among the language strands, between language and content, between instruction and assessment, and between teaching and learning. Another feature is that a visual framework for each unit is the focus for both instruction and assessment (Ewy, 1993) so that all students, irrespective of their proficiency level, can become engaged and actively involved in the tasks. Lastly, the *Exemplars*, in capitalizing on student and community resources, are intended to highlight the linguistic and cultural richness students bring to school.

A Local Perspective: A System of Complementary Assessments

The second illustration of an assessment system that holds promising practice for language minority students is a school wide effort. This K-8 magnet school in Chicago has served as a dual language (Spanish/English) model for more than twenty-five years. Given its mission, the traditional, norm-referenced assessments required by the Board of Education for monitoring student progress have not reflected the school's philosophy or have not accurately portrayed student performance. The faculty and administration therefore wanted to create an assessment system that was:

1. representative of the full spectrum of teaching and learning in two languages;

2. clearly articulated from grade to grade and from cycle to cycle;

Community Rubric & Observation Notes

For teacher use with Class Record Sheet. Clear task columns show when the specific indicator is most observable. Space is provided to note circumstances of the demonstrated learning. Teachers may use the space to record class circumstances or to document individual student demonstrations of learning.

Knowledge	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Evidence
Content Information or processes Use relevant A-F Indicators to put each task's knowledge score on the Class Record Sheet. **1** incomplete, major errors **2** incomplete, minor errors **3** complete, minor errors **4** complete, accurate	Understanding Community	Representing Community	Using a Map of Model	Describe where, when and/or how the student showed this level of knowledge.
A. Can identify resources useful for meeting own or other's specific need				
B. Knows what occurs in each place identified as a major resource				
C. Can indicate main function(s) of major community helpers				
D. Considers own and group needs to see if community works				
E. Locates the major community resources on map/model				
F. Shows how to get from one place to another				

Reasoning	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Evidence
Analysis, synthesis, evaluation Use relevant A-E indicators to put each task's reasoning score on the Class Record Sheet **1** incomplete, major errors, no rationale **2** incomplete, minor errors, some rationale **3** complete, minor errors, some rationale **4** complete, accurate, strong rationale	Understanding Community	Representing Community	Using a Map of Model	Describe where, when and/or how the student showed this level of knowledge.
A. Indicates what needs can be fulfilled by each resource				
B. Provides rationale for choice of resource to meet a specific need				
C. Connects own and others' actions to ways community works/doesn't				
D. Can give rationale for placement of major community helpers on map/mural				
E. Communicates the usefulness or lack of usefulness of a map in meeting a specific need				

Communication	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Evidence
Clear message, specific terms and vocabulary such as resources, specific community helpers' names, geographic or location terms Use relevant A-E indicators to put each task's communication score on the Class Record Sheet **1** partly clear, no terms **2** partly clear, some terms **3** mostly clear, most appropriate terms **4** totally clear, all appropriate terms	Understanding Community	Representing Community	Using a Map of Model	Describe where, when and/or how the student showed this level of knowledge.
A. Can name the major resources studied				__orally __in English __in writing __in L1 Description:
B. Can name the major community helpers				__orally __in English __in writing __in L1 Description:
C. Can articulate thoughts/feelings about the community working for self and others				__orally __in English __in writing __in L1 Description:
D. Uses age-appropriate geographic terms to describe location				__orally __in English __in writing __in L1 Description:
E. Uses age-appropriate geographic terms to describe the path from one place to another				__orally __in English __in writing __in L1 Description:

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3. reasonable and manageable for students and teachers; and

4. easily understood by parents.

The results from a needs assessment revealed that teachers wanted to first concentrate in the area of language arts and use multiple forms of assessment, including performance tasks and rubrics, anecdotal records, self and peer reflection, and journals. A committee was formed of teacher representatives from each grade, special education, and ESL with the charge of designing a framework and guidelines for the assessment system and conducting professional development to introduce it to the staff. A driving assumption in the system's design was the belief that assessment and instruction were intertwined and that information gathered from classrooms was invaluable in making sound decisions about students.

One of the first activities of the committee was to determine by grade level what, in the area of assessment, was already in place, what was needed, and what was to be included in the system. The objective of this endeavor was to capitalize on the teachers' strengths in data collection and to avoid duplication of effort. This analysis led to the discovery of patterns of assessment methods. For example, grades kindergarten through grade five relied on anecdotal information, checklists, and working portfolios while grades seven and eight focused on project- based rubrics. Learning logs, where students summarize and reflect upon their learning, were common across grades.

Throughout this process, teachers were introspective, coming to the realization that, indeed, their instructional and assessment practices were student-centered and could remain that way. The assessment system that was emerging did not necessarily impede or restrict teachers, but rather, facilitated articulation between grade levels and provided much insight into what students do.

Another lesson learned was that building upon already sound instruction and assessment practices is arduous and time consuming.

At the close of the academic year, the entire faculty reached consensus regarding the development of assessment portfolios for the students. Each grade level team decided what was central to learning for that year. Minimally, two required pieces of original work (one in Spanish, one in English), scored with a rubric, and student self-reflections along with a student selected entry were to be included in each student's portfolio.

An assessment system must be dynamic as are the teachers in this school who take responsibility for its creation as well as ongoing refinement and improvement. A lot of decisions await the coming year. Technology will

definitely play a role. The middle and upper grades are leaning toward the use of computers to create digitized assessment portfolios that would yield student summary profiles. Others are contemplating the use of audio-cassettes for the collection of oral language samples and video-cassettes to capture fine arts and drama. It is both the process and the product, in this instance, that exemplify promising assessment practices.

Assessment Systems as Promising Assessment Practices

The state of Illinois and a Chicago school have made a concerted effort to enhance the educational opportunities for their students, in particular, those from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds, through promising assessment practices. In both instances, assessment systems have been devised that are flexible, yet rigorous, and multifaceted, yet unified and cohesive. The underlying reason for their promise is the fact that they are outgrowths, with direct links, to sound instructional practices.

The challenge that looms ahead for states, districts, and schools is how to maintain a balance among the contributing components of an assessment system. More often than not, a single standardized test used in large scale assessment (such as at the district or state level) is more high stake, is more heavily weighted , and has more severe consequences for students and schools than any other measure in the system. The philosophical tenets of assessment (the use of multiple measures from multiple perspectives with multiple data points) must be upheld without succumbing to the demands of accountability through testing. This issue is of special concern for language minority students who may have to demonstrate their achievement through alternate means.

The design, development, and delivery of assessment systems are a commitment in time and resources. When assessment systems form mosaics, the information gleaned is more comprehensive and the stakeholders more enlightened than when assessment operates vacuously, without context. Assessment systems informed by a multilingual and multicultural perspective benefit language minority students, their teachers, and schools. The two such systems outlined in this paper are a tribute to promising assessment practices for language minority students.

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Chapter 6

Parental Involvement: The Need to Include Parents of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

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> *The evidence is now beyond dispute. When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. (Henderson & Berla, 1995, p. 1)*

Since 1964, federal and state legislation throughout the nation has sharpened awareness of the need for parental involvement in education, yet few programs have succeeded in establishing strong collaborative relationships between school, home and community (Henderson & Berla, 1995).

The available research on home-school relationships speaks to the importance of the school-home connection, its democratic tradition, its importance in assisting schools to carry out their missions, and the empowerment that collaboration can give to parents. The importance of the home-school relationship is underscored by Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) finding that

> . . . the lowest level of family involvement in school programs and processes is among parents of average students, minority parents, and in step families and single-parent families. Given these findings, failure to change parent-school relations will perpetuate inequality (p. 77).

The importance of parent participation in our school communities will be the focus of this discussion. Specifically, the discussion will examine the research on the factors that hinder or promote the participation of language minority parents in our school communities. As a backdrop, I will first describe the historical and political basis for parent participation in U.S. public schools. Then, I will discuss each of the following: the types of parent education programs, parent participation in education, academic characteristics of low-income communities, language minority communities and school holding power, parent and school support and linkages, distance in school and parent cooperation, and empowering home-school collaboration. The discussion will conclude with a presentation of predictable tensions that are present in school communities when language minority parents actively seek to become involved with their school communities.

The Importance of Parent Participation

The Institute for Responsive Education's national project, *School Reaching Out* (Davis, Burch, & Johnson, 1992), speaks to the importance of renewing urban school politics and practices through parent-involvement initiatives. The concern is triggered by the educational failure of millions of language minority students and low-income ethnically diverse children in our nation, who are already underachieving by the third grade. This underachievement threatens

their participation as citizens in a democratic society, as contributing members of their communities, and as productive workers in the economy of the 21st Century (Davis, 1990; Espinosa & Ochoa, 1992; Henderson & Berla, 1995).

The goal of increasing parent involvement in U.S. public schools through parent education and training is commensurate with the political principle, upheld by tradition, that public schools should be responsible to the communities they serve. Local school boards, parent teacher associations, educational agencies and the local school community all owe their existence to this principle. It fits well with our society's view of itself as democratic. Indeed, public education is counted among the most important of our democratic institutions (Epstein, 1987; Henderson & Berla, 1995; Rich, 1988). The participating members of a community determine policy for the community as a whole; in a democracy, all of a community's members should have equal access to participation. As Dewey (1916), Benellos & Roussopolos (1971), Nuñez (1994), and Pearl (1989) suggest, the education of children in a democratic society requires that schools adhere to the principles outlined below.

Principles for Parental Involvement in a Democratic Society

Educational planning requires the participation of its clients.

- Parental participation must include collective decision-making—for the commitment made by the participants will motivate them toward practical implementation of planned action.

- Parental participation will ensure accurate decisions, speed reform, create active leadership, and provide a forum for discussion of priorities.

- Decision making is the process whereby people discuss, decide, plan and implement those decisions that affect their lives. This requires that the decision-making process be continuous and significant; direct, rather than through representatives; and organized around issues rather than personalities.

A growing body of judicial decisions and enacted legislation affirms the democratic responsibility of public schools. *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act* of 1964, the *HEW May 25, 1970* Memorandum, the ***Lau v. Nichols*** Supreme Court Decision (1974), the *Equal Educational Opportunity Act* (1974), and federally funded entitlement programs all clearly require public schools to involve parents actively in the education of their children. Explicitly and implicitly, current law and state and federal mandates affirm that instructional programs must take into consideration the concerns, views and values of the communities to which students belong. The need for students to experience school

membership and community identity is a necessary condition of any effective school program and experience. In short, there are many reasons why educational program planners, administrators and implementors need to seek an open, participatory and collaborative relationship with language minority parent communities (Berla and Hall, 1989; Henderson & Berla, 1995). Probably none is more important today than our desperate need to remedy the underachievement of students, which requires conceptualizing, designing and implementing parent education interventions that result in well-adjusted and academically successful students.

Different Perspectives on Educating Parents to Increase Their Involvement

"Parent involvement" can have many meanings when applied to education. According to Laosa (1982), Comer and Haynes (1992), and Ochoa (1997), the term can refer to a broad range of contracts between parents and educators, and between parents and children. Such a contract can be approached from a social pathology perspective, which holds that parents of certain ethnic or cultural backgrounds or social classes must be taught to compensate for a "deficit" before they can be effectively involved with schools (viz: they need to be "brought up" to the school's level). Moreover, the children of these parents also suffer from some "deficiency" that must be corrected before their low academic achievement can be reversed. These assumptions, typically derived from the observed apathy of parents, inevitably drives those planning parent training to seek a model designed to "cure," usually by teaching the importance of parental responsibility and concern (Nuñez, 1994).

Another approach, however, recognizes ethnically and culturally diverse parents as concerned citizens whose integration into the school community requires only that they be given an opportunity to learn the local customs and taboos. This alternative view -- which serves as the premise for the parent training model presented herein -- perceives parents as agents of change who can transform their school communities and home contexts into settings of concern and support for developing the human potential of all members. This premise assumes that parents possess self-respect, a sense of responsibility, concern for the welfare of youth and the determination to act for the good of the community (Pearl, 1989). Parent education is designed to serve persons who have been denied access to the levers of democratic participation. They require education for social transformation which will empower them to change the barriers that hinder full human development and parental involvement in the social,

economic and political context of mainstream society. When parents become involved with the education of their children, students become more motivated to achieve (Henderson, 1985). As parents acquire more knowledge and skills through their involvement with their children's school, they become collaboratively engaged in transforming the culture of the school (Freire, 1973; Epstein & Dauber, 1989). This school culture seeks to develop the social and academic skills of all students. The goal of both parents and school becomes one of providing real access to knowledge, skills, career choices and higher education (Centron, 1991; Espinosa & Ochoa, 1992; Henderson & Berla, 1995; Oakes & Lipton, 1990; Toch, 1991).

Parent Participation in Education

It is widely held that low school-retention of ethnically diverse and language minority students, particularly of those living in low-income communities, is due in part to a lack of appropriate parental support for, and participation in, public school educational programs. An often expressed opinion, based on the active experience of parents and educational support agency professionals, is that ethnically diverse and language minority parents fail to participate effectively in the education of their children. The explanations most often heard are that such parents do not understand the importance of education to their children's futures; that they are unaware of schools' expectations of them in regard to their children; that they are unaware of school and teachers' expectations of their children; that they do not understand the structures and functions of public education; and that they are unaware of their rights and responsibilities as parents in a democratic society. It is assumed that these habits or behaviors are exacerbated by such parents' failure to understand and speak the English language. Usually, those advancing these explanations are emphatic in asserting that ethnically diverse and language minority parents are too busy fighting for daily survival and have no time for their children. Whether or not this assertion is true, their description of poor, ethnically and linguistically diverse parents' and children's condition is a detailed picture of those who can expect to benefit the least from "our" public education.

Yet, in almost the same breath, we hear the emphatic assertion that education is *especially* needed by parents and children whose ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds are such that they must learn "the American way" to succeed in "our" society (Ascher, 1988). This double-bind not only locks educators into low expectations, it shields their own responsibility for student failure. It also sends a message of hopelessness to the very parents and communities "our" educators say they are trying to reach.

A vocal minority -- often of poor and language minority parents themselves -- is countering the common explanations and assumptions with truths rooted in their own experience and personal struggle to address the needs of their children. They assert -- and demonstrate -- that poor, ethnically diverse and language minority parents *do care* about education and have a high level of awareness of their own need for training to participate cooperatively with public schools (Comer & Haynes, 1992; Cummins, 1989; Fine, 1989; Henderson, 1987; Henderson & Berla, 1995; Nye, 1989).

Academic Characteristics of Low-Income Communities

A plethora of evidence documents that ethnically diverse and language minority youth do less well in public schools, on average, than do mainstream youth. The following are examples are illustrative of Latino children, but equally applicable to other ethnically diverse and language minority children (Clark, 1983; National Center for Education Statistics, 1994; Oakes, 1990):

> Data collected by the California State Department of Education and analyzed by the Social Equity Technical Assistance Center at San Diego State University showed that in 1977-1987, 46.3% of California's Latino l2th graders attended schools where the average reading scores ranked in the State's lowest 25th percentile. Only 9% of Latino students attended schools with average reading scores in the top 25th percentile. In contrast, 34.l% of Anglo l2th graders were in schools where the average reading score was in the top 25th percentile and only ll.8 % were in schools ranked in the lowest 25th percentile. The contrast applies if we look at scores for 3rd or 6th graders, or if we examine math instead of reading scores. This pattern of achievement remained constant in 1991-92 (Espinosa & Ochoa, 1992).

That a causal relationship exists between poverty and low educational achievement -- and, conversely, between economic success and educational attainment -- is well-documented (Nathan, 1986; Harris and Associates, 1987; Nuñez, 1994). It is also an article of faith in the United States that education is the key to upward social and economic mobility. Thus, the research in this area points to the need to empower parents to work with their school communities and to create a home environment that encourages learning. There is also a need to help them express high expectations for their children's achievement and future careers, and identify ways in which to be involved in their children's education at school and in the community (Henderson & Berla, 1995).

Language Minority Communities and School Holding Power

How large a portion of its population can a society tolerate as undereducated, underemployed, and undercompensated? This question cannot be ignored if we recognize that these terms describe a rapidly expanding share of the U.S. population. In the case of Latino language minority communities, the 1990 census shows that the Latino population is growing faster than any other ethnic group in the nation. This fastest growing ethnic group suffers a school dropout rate in excess of 45%. Of the 55% Latino youth who graduate from high school, only 10% have acquired skills sufficient for pursuit of a college education (Espinosa & Ochoa, 1992).

The demographic reality must affect the way we view the public school system's failure to retain and educate ethnically diverse and language minority youth. As their numbers grow, it is clear that their lack of school success ceases to be -- if ever it was -- their problem alone. The cost to the state and nation of their lost economic and social productivity is incalculable. The cost of social programs, law enforcement and other "remedies" for the social consequences of poverty and high unemployment are already astronomical. Demographic reality predicts a steady rise of those costs if the education of ethnically diverse youth is not substantially improved; and as those costs rise, they will be borne by a shrinking percentage of the population.

While opinions may vary as to the best programs for improving education, it is clear that no program will benefit students who do not participate in it. *Public schools' inability to retain ethnically diverse youth, particularly in high school, is critical.* Thus, collaboration with families is an essential component of a reform strategy, but it is not a substitute for a high quality education program or thoughtful, comprehensive school improvement (Kellagham, Sloane, Alvarex & Bloom, 1993; Comer & Haynes, 1992; Fine, 1989; Henderson & Berla 1995).

Parent and School Support and Linkages

Both critics and defenders of the public school system agree that lack of communication, cooperation and participation by schools and parents of low-income youth is a critical factor negatively affecting students' success and schools' holding power (Henderson & Berla, 1995; Lightfoot, 1978; Nuñez, 1994). Students enter school from a cultural background different from that of the school. They often come without any exposure to mainstream values and expectations assumed by the school curriculum. These students have a different socialization background than that expected by their teachers and school

personnel. Furthermore, a significant number of ethnically diverse and language minority students have a dominant language other than English. In order to open the door which theoretically leads to social and economic independence, they are expected to identify with school's expectations, learn its language, compete successfully in its assigned tasks and identify their future well-being with school success.

A bridge must be built to link the home and the school for such students. Without the bridge, there is only a chasm. A bridge, however, must have footings solidly on each bank if it is to be secure. It must be built consciously and cooperatively by parents and educators who share understanding, concerns, goals, and expectations of and for the children who are their joint responsibility (Brice Heath & McLaughlin, 1987; Rich, 1988; Nuñez, 1994).

Parents have a right to a voice in, and a review of, the way schools meet their children's needs. Where parents consistently fulfill these roles in cooperation with the schools, their children do well, and drop-out rates are low (Delgado-Gaitán, 1990; Nuñez, 1994; Rich, 1987).

The relationship between parent participation with schools and school effectiveness is widely accepted in the many "special," "compensatory" and "remedial" school programs mandated or provided by state and federal agencies. Yet, too often, these programs have failed in their intent, and often program evaluations have suggested that the one critical program fault was the failure to accomplish the parent-participation goals (Ascher, 1988; Nuñez, 1994). A strong parent-school involvement program, it is suggested, needs to stress that the parents must be actively involved to ensure a relevant and meaningful education for their children.

Distance in School and Parent Cooperation

The gulf between public schools and the parents and communities of language minority and ethnically diverse students is a reality that the present generation of parents and school personnel have experienced. This is not the place to examine causes, but to identify obstacles to a solution. Regrettably, we must recognize the strong expectation among public school educators that language minority parents will not fulfill their role as collaborators for their children's education (Epstein & Dauber, 1989; Nuñez, 1994). This is expressed in studies that describe the conceptual and social mismatch of experience that low-income children bring to school. It is also expressed in the frequent explanations from teachers and principals that ethnically diverse and language minority parents do not care about their children's schooling (Henderson & Berla, 1995). As expressed by Massey, Scott and Dornbusch (1975),

> contrary to some beliefs, poor and minority children are constantly being told that they are doing well when they are not, that their work is satisfactory when it is not, and that they are progressing when they are not.

Not only are these students deluded, but so are their parents. Consequently, the public often sees that ethnically diverse and low-income students with passing grades cannot function at work or in college.

Empowering Home-School Collaboration

Epstein (1987), in her research on parent involvement, suggests five major types of parent involvement that are part of different schools' programs:

1. The basic obligations of parents;
2. The basic obligations of schools;
3. Parent involvement at school;
4. Parent involvement in learning activities at home to assist their children; and
5. Parent involvement in governance and advocacy.

Furthermore, Goodson and Hess (1978), Rich (1985), Comer and Haynes (1992), and Henderson and Berla (1995), in their research on parent involvement, differentiate parent education into five types, each with a distinct goal based on a corresponding assumption as to the useful role of the parent.

Types of Parental Involvement

1. Parents as more effective role models;
2. Parents as better parents in educating their children;
3. Parents as supporting resources for the school;
4. Parents as collaborators and problem solvers; and
5. Parents as action researchers and policy makers.

All such parent education accepts parents as active participants, although perhaps in varying degrees, and not as passive followers of their children's education. What is suggested is a training approach designed to provide parents with knowledge, skills and sensitivity to support the cognitive and social development of all students -- for the good of the community.

Suggested Goals for Parent Training

- Be effective teachers of their own children;
- Be equal collaborators with schools for their children's development; and
- Influence educational excellence for all children.

Such a parent training empowerment model calls for language minority and

ethnically diverse parents to be trained to develop positive support and to exercise collaborative participation with public schools.

Underlying the empowerment training approach is a conviction that success in life requires a conscious understanding of certain socio-political structural relationships (Persell, 1977) as they are articulated in our society. This understanding of structural relationships begins with understanding how social beliefs and values shape and influence school curricula and educational policy. In turn, the policy and values which operate as school practice influence the academic achievement of different groups and shape their career expectations. Educational practice forms socialization experiences and shapes educational and occupational aspirations which, in turn, influence the actual academic achievement -- which is the educational outcome of students' interaction with the public school institution (Freire, 1985; Jones, 1997; Persell, 1977). Thus, the long term goal of effective parent training and empowerment is to demystify societal, institutional, interpersonal and intra-psychic relationships so that parents may move proactively to secure educational practices which nurture the development of all students as participants responsible for shaping our democracy.

The present reality suggests that there is a gulf between public schools and language minority communities. In its broadest sense, it is a cultural and a political one (Chaukin, 1989; Fine, 1989; Ochoa, 1997). The past, since the early 1970's, has shown that the school system itself is limited in its ability to provide the training needed for parents. However, the experience (supported by Harris & Associates, 1987; Henderson & Berla, 1995) has been that deep and lasting results occur when parent training takes place in the context of parent/community mobilization to exercise democratic, participatory rights in defense of their children's education.

Recommended Practice

The research on school-parent collaboration (Ascher, 1988; Fine, 1989; Henderson & Berla, 1995; Nuñez, 1994; Gorman & Balter, 1997) suggests that the most effective results will be obtained by low income communities which institutionalize the training of their members to support and participate with the public schools as an element within their local cultures. This approach promises a self-supporting system that will not be perceived as alien or imposed from the outside, but rather a culture-owned means of participation in a multicultural society.

Parent education directed at enhancing home-school collaboration, governance or advocacy sees parents as active participants and not as passive followers of their children's education.

School-parent organizational tensions should also be acknowledged and used to strengthen parent participation. The research on language minority communities are documenting a language of possibilities through active parent involvement with school communities (Ochoa, 1997). Yet, parental involvement has also produced tensions. As parents exert their rights as advocates for their children and their communities, tensions do arise. The research points to the need for schools to acknowledge that tensions are part of growth and renewal. Parental involvement tensions are part of change, they bring an opportunity to view parent advocacy as a new possibility of engagement and mutual responsibility rather than as home-school conflict.

Potential Organizational Tensions in the Process of Empowering Parents

■ **Tension in communication and negotiations.** As parents become more actively involved with their schools and become more assertive in interacting with school personnel, the tension in communicating and negotiating home and school accountability needs to be understood. Preparing the school community to expect and address new parent behaviors as positive and as part of the dialogue between school and home is imperative for schools.

■ **Tension over school control.** As parents raise their voices and express their concerns (e.g., about school climate, environment or school facilities) to the superintendent and school-board, socio-political and organizational tensions arise among those who previously exercised control. Often school principals are told to control their parent communities or face reprimand. Parent training directed at parents assuming responsibility for the well-being of their children and for their school community will generate a positive tension. If the tension of participatory democratic process is addressed responsibly it can and should lead to a win-win relationship and not a win-lose relationship.

■ **Tension in parents as advocates.** As parents become advocates for their children and their communities, their behavior is often perceived as an intrusion into the normalcy of classroom or school. The intrusion should be treated instead as creating a bridge between parents, teachers, students and administrators which will produce a partnership for achieving a single objective -- developing the full potential of students and ensuring their career opportunities.

■ **Tension in parents as co-equal partners.** As parents focus on their children's development and raise questions about their academic and social skills, they often feel they are not accepted as co-equal partners by school personnel. The professional community's reluctance to see low-income parents

as capable co-equals is a social and political failure that must be addressed. Schools must create horizontal relationships with parents. Vertical power relations leads to win-lose relationships, while horizontal power relations leads to win-win relationships.

- **Tension in school organizational support.** Few school communities initiate follow-up training after long-term parent training interventions. Parent empowerment is an on-going process that requires support, faith, respect, patience and problem solving.

- **Tension in systems change.** As parents articulate problems, conditions, and solutions that challenge the too-long-held "deficit perspective," and as they advocate for a "systems change" perspective, parent-school-community tension will increase. Such tensions require dialogue between the stakeholders of the educational system and parent communities in order to move people from blaming each other for disempowering conditions and into a dialogue of problem solving. An ecological, open-systems approach that seeks problem solving and the involvement of families, social agencies, and the school is an activity for school leadership to implement.

Finally, our nation is calling for the restructuring of schools to ensure that all students, regardless of their linguistic, ethnic or economic background attain high levels of performance. This requires that schools be transformed into more flexible and democratic systems to produce high performance by all of its members (Comer & Haynes, 1992; Ochoa, 1997; Nuñez, 1994). In such a system, change is incorporated as a dynamic process involving parents, students, teachers and school leadership. It involves accountability as a broader process in which everyone in the school community is involved for the sake of attaining high performance. It is a system where human resources are involved in both providing services and enhancing their ongoing development of the school community; and it manages its infrastructure in an efficient and effective way that is student -- centered.

In summary, the research findings on parent education and language minority parent communities are very promising. The research not only points to language minority communities being interested, willing, and socially responsible for improving the quality of education provided to their children, but a vision also exists for making schooling a truly participatory and empowering institution. Parents want to exercise their right to equal participation in meaningful decision making where their right to informed knowledge is promoted, where their right to due process is respected, where their children receive equal encouragement to career choices, and where equal participation in school activities is not undermined or denied.

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Chapter 7

Building Effective Family/School Partnerships: Effective Practices in Arlington County Public Schools

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Introduction

The changing face of the school-age population in the United States compels us to rethink how we structure school, family and community partnerships. The national population is becoming more ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse. As Eugene García outlined in Chapter 1, these major demographic changes require schools to encourage new attitudes and to develop practices to foster a more cohesive relationship between families and schools so that **all** students will succeed academically and become contributing members of their communities and society.

The different actors in a school community have different concerns, different needs, and different activities involving families. Teachers might be interested in reinforcing classroom lessons by providing ideas and materials that parents can use at home; the school counselor and nurse might want to develop workshops to assist families with child-rearing skills, or address issues such as family violence and drug and gang prevention; and Parent/Teacher Association leaders might need to recruit new members to hold more successful fundraising events. Very often, actors in the school setting plan and implement programs and activities with little coordination or communication. The result tends to be a fragmented and weak home-school program.

Arlington Public Schools in Arlington, Virginia is noted for its tradition of actively involving and promoting family school and community partnerships to support education. In a recent national survey (Zero Population Growth, 1997), Arlington was considered one of the "friendliest" counties for families. As Arlington evolved from a monolingual English speaking school population to one that is increasingly diverse, multicultural and multilingual, our school system saw the need to strengthen the bond of cooperation between home and school. Presently over 40% of our students come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. Over 70% of the language minority population are Latino. These students represent approximately 98 countries, 70 languages and a vast array of cultural and educational backgrounds.

Arlington's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Programs and High Intensity Language Training (HILT) program staff recognized the importance of using a variety of models and approaches to involve language minority families in school activities. Schools in this nation face the need to equip students for a society that demands they be academically, technologically, and socially well prepared for success. School staff cannot do it alone. Strong partnerships need to be established between schools, family and communities to provide an effective and comprehensive instructional program for students.

In this article, we will share our experiences and approaches as a district supervisor, a principal and a family program coordinator working at both the district and school levels. We will recount our ongoing efforts to develop and nurture cooperative links between schools and the families we serve. First, we will describe the conceptual framework that guides our practice. Second, we will identify the factors that affect family involvement in language minority families. We will conclude by providing examples of different types of successful activities at the district and local school levels.

Framework of Family Involvement: What Research Tells Us

Research in the following three areas has guided our practice in Arlington: (1) social and cultural aspects of learning, (2) empowerment and participation, and (3) building school and community partnerships. Researchers have extensively studied the relationship of culture, ethnicity and socioeconomic status to learning. Brice Heath (1992), Gonzales, Moll et al (1993) and Wong-Fillmore (1991) found that differences in language use in the home and at school cause problems in achievement for children whose home environment does not mirror the dominant social culture in schools. Language and socialization practices used by middle and upper class English-speaking families are reinforced in school, whereas the language and socialization practices in linguistic minority families do not match those found in school. Collier's (1995) research reflects the notion that these social and cultural processes have at their foundation the need to see the student as a member of a particular family, a particular culture and a particular community. The value of maintaining the native language varies from family to family as there are many sociocultural variables that influence native language maintenance. Wong-Fillmore (1991) recommends that parents should interact with their children in the language the parents know best so as not to impede their children's cognitive development.

According to Brice Heath (1992), many educators tend to expect that learning for all children follows a single developmental characteristic of mainstream middle-class English speaking children. For these educators, the assumption is that when children's sociocultural and linguistic background is different from what is expected in schools, they are considered "deficient." This assumption is inaccurate. In fact, these children tend to achieve academic success *based* on what they learn from their home language and culture. Including diversity in instruction is considered to be very important in promoting learning and empowerment. Freire's model of family literacy invites parents to become participants in shaping the content and process of their own education (Auerbach,

1992). Understanding the process of acculturation is crucial, especially when families are not English proficient. Culture is deeply ingrained in our identity, but language, the means for communication among members, is the most visible expression of one's culture. Brown states in his work the importance of acknowledging and including culture and language as well as facilitating a transition between them. He notes that "a person's world view, self-identity, and systems of thinking, acting, feeling and communicating can be disrupted by a change from one culture to another" (Brown, 1994, 170).

Language minority students often have the pressure of functioning in two different worlds - the culture and language of the home and the culture and language of school. Students, particularly adolescents, are torn between the demands for independence and decision-making at school with the demand to continue to accept parental authority at home. Schools need to be aware of the needs and conflicts these students contend with. Moreover, teachers need to understand the acculturation process and all that it entails to work effectively with students and families. The *Teacher Research on Funds of Knowledge* teacher training model (Gonzales, Moll et al., 1992) provides teachers with an excellent framework for understanding their families. This "teachers as researchers" model requires participants to learn about their students' every day life.

While Gonzales and Moll address the need to learn more about what students of different cultures bring to school, Epstein endorses the importance of developing partnerships between schools and communities. Epstein (May, 1995) maintains that when "parents, teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work." In her research, she identified six categories of school, family and community partnerships: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning At Home, Decision-Making and Collaborating with the Community.

Other research (Henderson and Berla, 1994) supports the notion that in full partnerships, parents must be able to play four key roles in their children's learning, as (1) teachers, (2) supporters, (3) decision-makers and (4) advocates. As teachers, parents create a home environment that promotes learning and reinforces what is being taught at school. As supporters, they contribute their time, skills and knowledge to the school; as decision-makers, they serve on advisory councils and other working committees in the school; and as advocates, they help children negotiate the system and work to make the system more responsive to families. Studies have shown that children do best when their parents are able to play these four roles. Moreover, the four roles have a synergistic effect, each multiplying the influence of the others. Together they have a powerful impact.

Arlington has worked very actively during the last decade to promote parent-school partnerships and to provide parents and schools with the knowledge and skills they need to support each other. What follows is a summary of selected Arlington initiatives at the district and school level.

Family and Community Involvement at the District Level: The Arlington Experience

Collaborative research conducted by George Mason University and the ESOL/HILT department (1995) compared the educational backgrounds, attitudes and expectations of language minority students with native English speaking students. The survey found that language minority students tended to have parents with less formal schooling than parents of native English-speaking students. About 31% of language minority parents have less than an elementary school education, as compared to 3% of the native English speaking parents. Further investigation revealed that more than 57% parents of our limited English proficient students had fewer than five years of schooling. Of the 570 parents, 433 were Spanish-speaking, 53 were Somali, and the rest were distributed among 15 languages.

Successful home-school partnerships require district level response in tandem with school-based initiatives (Violand, et.al., 1991). District-level initiatives establish the framework for outreach to parents and community but implementation varies from school to school because of individual community needs. Ideally, planning at the district and local school levels would be carried out concurrently so that partnerships are designed to meet mutually established goals. We found that we needed to establish a team to develop and implement activities for parents at different stages of involvement and educational background.

Arlington's vision for parental involvement is supported by the Research for Better Schools (1993) which proposes that programs should be designed with the following two assumptions:

(1) that language minority students and families have unrecognized abilities and potential; and

(2) that they are resilient and will be engaged in schools, provided that we engage them in a partnership that minimizes the mismatch between home and schools.

Based on our diverse student population and our vision of family and community involvement in Arlington, we have focused our efforts in three main areas at the district level: staff development, family support programs, and home, school, and community partnership initiatives, to construct a solid framework for greater family involvement in the education of their children.

I. Staff Development Initiatives

We recognize that staff development on the social and cultural aspects of learning is essential. Teachers who work with children and families who live outside the mainstream of American life need to recognize and appreciate different perspectives and respond appropriately to them. A culturally-responsive pedagogy starts with the premise that how people learn may differ across cultures. Cultural differences present both opportunities and challenges for school staff; students will achieve more academically when school staffs translate their knowledge of the cultures represented in their schools into instructional practice.

Teacher training in Arlington included courses and workshops focused on the sociocultural aspects of learning. We found the *Teacher Research on Funds of Knowledge* model quite helpful. When teachers conducted case studies and visited their students' homes, these visits were not conducted in the usual manner. Rather than teachers' orienting parents on school expectations, the focus of the home visits was to gather information, the "funds of knowledge," about our families. After visiting their students' families and communities, teachers concluded that their perceptions and attitudes had been altered. Most importantly, they felt that they had established new, caring relationships with their students and families. Teachers reported gaining a new view of the strengths, resilience, and "funds of knowledge" of their students' parents. One teacher who conducted a case study with a Somalian student stated, "In sharing intimate details of her life, the student teaches the teacher that even when one has lost one's home, citizenship, friends and family, a person can maintain the motivation to succeed and demonstrate a true appreciation of the accomplishment of the mind."

II. Family Support Programs

In designing appropriate support systems for parents, the experiences and resources of language minority families are acknowledged and respected. Although every family entering the school system is unique, some generalizations can be helpful when planning programs (Violand-Sanchez et al, 1991). First, school staff should recognize that the vast majority of its language minority families are still in the process of adjusting to the mainstream culture

and the need to speak English. Second, it is essential to take into consideration the stages of acculturation, their length of residence in the United States, their English language proficiency and educational level. Third, although more and more language minority students are born in the United States, nearly all of their families have come here as immigrants and refugees. Keeping these generalizations in mind when designing support systems for parents and families will enhance their effectiveness.

What follows is a brief description of some of the family support programs and systems that Arlington provides.

Intake Center. School systems with large numbers of language minority families should establish procedures and support for enrollment and interpretation. New immigrants need considerable orientation and support to understand how to enroll their children in school. Information and assistance given in the native language is important. Time for participation in school activities tends to be limited but the level of parental interest is quite high.

Arlington's Intake Center is an effective first point of contact with the school system. At the Intake Center, multilingual assistance is available for registration, placement testing, and information services. At the beginning of the school year, there is a district-wide orientation meeting for all parents new to the district. Throughout the year, the Intake Center staff and hourly paid interpreters are available at individual schools for parent/teacher conferences.

Bilingual Staff. Parents whose English proficiency is limited find it difficult or intimidating to communicate with school staff or to help with school activities without bilingual support from someone in the school or community. Bilingual school personnel can make a crucial difference in fostering involvement among parents, so the school system has assigned bilingual community liaisons to schools with large enrollments of language minority students. Bilingual community liaisons are a valuable resource to families and staff because they bridge the communication gap by translating and interpreting information provided to parents. Moreover, they provide personal contact with families through telephone calls, informal meetings, and family activities. A staff knowledgeable about the community and the school system, respectful and accepting of different values and customs, sensitive but not paternalistic can make a significant difference in fostering a successful family/school/community partnership.

Parenting Education. This type of involvement assists families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade

level. It also assists schools in understanding families. Parenting workshops need to consider child-rearing practices that are deeply rooted in cultural and religious beliefs that must be respected and taken into consideration. Brice Heath's research reminds us that we have to take into consideration parents' assumptions about child rearing and their role in teaching language, the range of types of language uses available to children at home, and the extent of exposure young children have in their communities. Our experience reveals that parents were most interested in attending workshops on the acculturation process and the differences between expectations for adolescents in the United States and their home country.

Supporting Students' Language and Culture. In Arlington, our research indicates that approximately 90% of our language minority students talk with their parents in their native language, but tend to switch to English when talking with siblings (Thomas and Collier, 1995). Given that the majority of parents use their native language at home, we encourage families to validate this practice by providing workshops on language development. To foster family communication, we also encourage parents to talk with their children in the language they feel most comfortable. Parents were gratified to learn that native language development is essential to academic achievement.

III. Community Partnerships

In this era of shrinking resources it is essential to build partnerships with community-based organizations and county agencies. The following two programs are examples of school-community partnerships which we found quite successful:

Family Literacy Program. In collaboration with the League of United Latin American Citizens (Council 4606) and with funding from the Arlington Foundation, we established a bilingual program, *Empowering the Family Through Literacy*. This program used Pablo Freire's participatory model for literacy development. In designing school, family, and community partnerships, acknowledging the experiences and resources of language minority parents, regardless of their education, English language proficiency, or length of residence in the United States, is vital to a program's success.

Project Family. Project Family is another excellent model of how a community organization, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC Council 4606), the Arlington County Division of Human Services, and the schools can collaborate to establish a parenting program in Spanish and English from prenatal to three years of age. Project Family was originally developed in

Venezuela and adapted to the United States to offer parenting classes for families in county clinics, low-income housing complexes in three areas of the county, and in the school for teenage parents. Presently, more than 400 parents are involved in Project Family. What follows is a description of how one elementary school has made intensive efforts to foster home-school cooperation with its families.

An Inclusive Model for Parent Involvement at the School Level: The Barrett Experience

During the past decade, Barrett Elementary School has witnessed a dramatic change in its student composition. It has moved from a school that served primarily white middle-class families, from the neighborhood that borders the school on one side, to one that is accommodating a rapidly growing number of children of recently arrived immigrant families. These families, mostly from Latin America, live in the apartment complexes which surround the school on its other three sides. Today, Barrett is the school in north Arlington with the largest percentage of Latino students, numbering about 70% of the student population. 15% are white students, 8% are African-American, and the remainder are recent immigrants from various Asian countries. 80% of the children qualify for free or reduced lunch and approximately 60% of the students are enrolled in the ESOL/HILT program.

In the past three years, Barrett's *Project Interaction* has made significant strides in developing a cohesive family program. Project Interaction is a school-wide special initiative developed by the school staff in 1995 to address some of the needs of Barrett's diverse student population. Project Interaction has three components: **building oral language, building expertise and building community.** The latter was chosen as a focus area because of the strong relationship that exists between family involvement and student achievement. To develop the BUILDING COMMUNITY component of the Project, the school hired a full-time Family Program Coordinator in 1996.

A key responsibility of the Family Program Coordinator is to facilitate an inclusive and collaborative process for developing an integrated home/school program that brings in the concerns, agendas and priorities of the various actors in the school community. This process has resulted in the elaboration of a more cohesive and coordinated plan of family activities at Barrett. The plan has been turned into a Family Calendar which is produced in English and Spanish and distributed to all members of the school community (parents, staff and collaborating organizations) at the beginning of the school year. The Family Calendar,

which has been praised for its user-friendly format, organizes the activities in three separate columns: Family Nights, Special Workshops and School-wide Events.

Barrett's theme for the 1997 school year was Partnership. In her welcoming remarks during Back to School Night, the principal called for families and staff to work together in the building of a strong home-school partnership to insure the success of all students. We find the partnership notion powerful in several ways. First, it moves away from a blaming or adversarial relationship towards a collaborative and equal relationship between the staff and the families. Second, for a partnership to work, the partners must assume certain responsibilities and do their fair share. Finally, the partners share goals in common. In this case, the highest goal is to ensure the success and well being of Barrett students. Below we describe some of the strategies we are using at Barrett for building community.

I. Family Nights

Barrett has designated one night of the week, Tuesday night, to be "Family Night." This is an evening where parents know that they can come to the school with their children for a family activity. Family Nights began in 1995 with "Library Night," and have been expanded to include "Computer Night" and "Math Night". The first Tuesday of the month is reserved for monthly PTA meetings.

Library Nights were created in 1995 as a strategy of *Project Interaction* to foster oral language development and family participation in the school. The program encourages and models reading to the children, engages parents and children in hands-on activities, encourages families to use the library regularly, and exposes them to literature from different genres and world cultures.

Each Library Night is led by a different teacher or group of teachers who plan the evening program, and a few are led by special guests. They choose the theme and story to be read and also plan a hands-on activity for parents and children to do together, such as a fast "make and take," a dramatization, or an educational game. All programs have a bilingual component, and most have a cross-cultural component. Teachers receive a small stipend for their work.

Library Nights take one hour and follow an established format. Parent volunteers help check in families at the entrance. Each family receives a Barrett library card the first time they come and their card is punched every time they come. As an incentive for participating, families who attend five or more evenings receive a special book bag imprinted with the "Family Night" logo. Readings are usually done both in English and Spanish to foster connections

with the immigrant Latino parents who are the majority population in the school. Story time is followed by a hands-on activity that children and their families do together. The purpose of this part of the program is to engage parents actively in a learning activity with their children. The last ten minutes are reserved for families to choose and check out books which they can keep for a two-week period.

Library Nights attract all segments of Barrett's diverse student population, appealing the most to families with small children (pre-K to third grade). During 1996-1997, the school offered 14 Library Nights, with an average attendance of 62 people per night, 34 children and 28 adults. One hundred family library cards were issued and over five hundred library books circulated as a result of this program.

In a survey conducted with participating families, the two reasons cited most often by parents for attending were that their children want to come and that the parents themselves enjoy the programs. Parents especially like having different teachers lead each night, the variety of themes and presentations, and having access to the books in the library. Another benefit, according to the families, is that the program cultivates children's interest in reading and motivates them to check out books.

Most families learned about the program through the flyers sent home with their children. For this reason, much attention has been given to producing bilingual flyers (Spanish/English) that catch people's interest. A standard design has been adopted that includes a special "Family Night" logo designed by a Barrett parent. Library Nights have received considerable attention from local media, becoming a source of visibility and pride for the Barrett community.

Computer Nights were added in 1996-97 as a means to introduce families to the new software that their children are using at school. They also provide an opportunity for families who do not have computers at home to visit and use the school Computer Lab. Six Computer Nights were offered during the 1996-97 school year. About 50 people attended each session, an average of 30 children and 20 adults. Some evenings were held as open houses where families were free to try out any software, others were dedicated to showing specific software used with certain grades. However, children from the lower grades came to every session regardless of the topic. By parent request, the 1997-98 series included a session on computer hardware. The session provided parents with information from a variety of resources before purchasing computers for their children to use at home.

Math Nights were offered for the first time in 1997-98. The school's management plan identified math as an area of focus for improvement. The Math Nights presented families with activities and materials designed to reinforce math skills and presented activities that parents could take home. We are currently planning to conduct a series, targeting different grade levels, of four Math Nights. Child care will be provided to encourage family participation.

II. Parent Education

Parenting Workshops are held regularly. Barrett seeks the collaboration of local organizations and agencies to meet the need of assisting families with parenting and child-rearing skills. For example, during the past school year, workshops series were held on good nutrition and improving children's behavior.

III. Recruiting, Educating and Involving Volunteers

Volunteering, as noted by Epstein, is one of the keys to successful school, family and community partnerships. Barrett is making a concerted effort to increase parent support both as audiences and as volunteers in the school. We are working on several fronts: promoting membership in the PTA, actively recruiting volunteers from the various ethnic and racial groups in the school, taking stock of the talents and availability of our parents to help in the school, and working to involve all families as volunteers in the school. Main strategies include:

Membership drives and incentives. In the past three years, the PTA and the staff have worked closely in membership campaigns that boosted the PTA membership to 228 members in 1995-96 and 280 in 1996-97, which represents about half the families. Campaign strategies include a bulletin board display in the front hall showing the growth in PTA membership for every grade, a pizza party for the first class to reach full membership, and an additional appeal letter in December. This year the PTA and Project Interaction are planning to work more to educate the community about what the PTA is and does so that parents can better understand how the system works and why it is important to join the PTA in their children's school.

Building a diverse pool of volunteers. In the past, parent volunteers in school events have been predominantly white, English-speaking parents who comprise 15% of Barrett families. Last year, through Project Interaction, the school staff made a concerted effort to recruit volunteers from other racial and ethnic groups for events that included the annual Book Fair and three *Reading is Fundamental* (RIF) events that were held during the year. At each of these events parents from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds were represented among the volunteers.

Building a catalog of the talents and availability of family members. In collaboration with the PTA, we created a form (known as "the pink card") to identify and record strengths in Barrett families and the ways in which family members could be and are willing to help as volunteers at school. This "catalog" is an invaluable tool for the school to identify resources. This year we revised the pink card. Using the partnership notion, we titled the revised card "Families Are Our Partners," and highlighted our 1998 goal to have each family volunteer at least one hour of their time per month to the school. There are ten slots on the form which will be checked off as family members volunteer for activities. Each family will be able to monitor its progress towards meeting this goal by checking how many slots are filled in.

IV. Enabling Parents as Decision-Makers, Leaders, and Advocates

Creating a Comité Latino in the PTA. Barrett is committed to enabling parents not only to be teachers of their children, but also to be supporters, advocates and decision-makers. Towards this end, *Project Interaction* facilitated the creation of the Comité Latino, a committee of Latino parents which is part of the PTA. While Barrett's PTA is very active and supportive of the school, its active members are mostly the parents of Barrett's white students, who are a minority in the school. The language barrier and a lack of understanding of how schools are structured in this country make it very difficult for Latino parents to be active in the PTA leadership. The truth is nobody wants to attend PTA meetings in which everything has to be said in two languages and heard twice. The main goal of Comité Latino is to provide a forum where Latino parents can communicate in their own language and organize to help with PTA and school activities.

Comité Latino initiated its activities in January 1997, and met regularly during the year. Meetings were attended by a core of about 12 to 15 parents who identified the following objectives for the committee:

- to promote unity among Barrett families;
- to promote greater involvement of the Latino community;
- to work collaboratively;
- to increase communication between the staff and Latino families; and
- to support the school in general.

Comité Latino assumed two major responsibilities during its first year of operation. It took on the organization of Barrett's annual Family Party, which included a "Reading is Fundamental" book distribution. Never before had Latino

parents been in charge of a family activity in the school. A week before the event, Comite Latino fathers were up on ladders hanging the decorations for the party -- over 400 paper hearts that students had decorated with the names and illustrations of their favorite books and that volunteer mothers had strung together. Comité Latino mothers made baskets with donated goods for a fund-raising raffle. During the party, Comité Latino parents sold donated food, drinks and raffle tickets. By all accounts, the event was a great success. Over 200 families gathered that night as a truly multicultural family where language was not a barrier. As a result, Comité Latino members felt empowered and were recognized by all segments of the Barrett community.

Comité Latino also provided the necessary parent support for the Outdoors Classroom Project, an initiative led by our science teacher and funded by community organizations. Comité Latino helped to raise additional funds for the project and took on the task of designing and building 4 outdoor benches for a new butterfly garden and 2 additional benches for the school playground.

Although a few staff members have expressed reservations about having a separate Latino committee, the strategy has proved very effective in generating the support needed from Spanish-speaking parents in PTA and family activities. Mechanisms are being put into place to ensure good communication between Comité Latino and the PTA and between Comité Latino and the staff. The newly appointed PTA vice-president is an active member of Comité Latino and will serve as the liaison between the two groups. The Family Program Coordinator will report monthly to the staff on Comité Latino activities.

Offering Citizenship and Leadership Training. After brainstorming and identifying priorities in the community, Project Interaction decided to offer a course on "Citizenship for Latino Parents" during the Spring. The course was co-sponsored by a local non-profit organization, Latinos for Leadership and Civic Duty. An innovative feature of the course was the inclusion of a lesson on rights and responsibilities of citizens in the arena of education. We also experimented with using children's books (biographies of famous historical figures such as George Washington) as a means for parents to learn the course material while reading these books with their children at home.

V. Communicating with Families

Communicating with families about school programs and student progress is a priority of Barrett. In addition to sending home school reports and Friday folders, every quarter teachers in every grade send home the list of academic goals for the students. Over half our families need translation or interpretation

to communicate with the school. To ensure that we are reaching all our families, all school-to-home communications are translated into Spanish. This poses an enormous challenge in terms of securing the material and human resources necessary to meet the school's communication needs. Other communicating strategies that Barrett has initiated include:

Family Survey on Home-School Communication. As a necessary step for deciding on new communication and participation strategies, last year the school conducted a family survey to take stock of our present situation in the areas of home-school communication and participation. The Steering Committee of Project Interaction, a group composed of staff and parents, helped design the survey. Questions were directed at finding out how families feel about home-school communication in Barrett, what needs they have, and which means for communicating with school and learning about family activities they use most often. The Committee sought and received in this process very valuable help from the Central office and from community volunteers with expertise in this area. The survey was narrowed down to one two-sided page and translated into Spanish.

The Committee decided to administer the survey during the 1996-97 Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences by organizing a Barrett Cafe in the front hall during the two conference days. This strategy proved very successful; 230 of the 330 Barrett families responded to the survey! Taking stock in these areas is helping us clarify our present situation and has provided useful baseline information for developing new strategies and assessing our progress as Barrett begins School Renewal, the process by which the state of Virginia accredits schools. The Barrett Cafe created such a welcoming climate that, by popular demand, it will be a regular feature of Parent/Teacher Conferences at Barrett.

A Bilingual Family Line. Through Project Interaction, we established and maintain a bilingual family line. Parents can call this telephone number to obtain information about family activities. The Community Line number is regularly publicized through flyers and the PTA Newsletter. The school also produced refrigerator magnets which include the school's main telephone numbers.

Monthly Coffees with the Principal. These informal coffees take place before the monthly PTA meeting begins. Topics vary from month to month and are selected based on parent interest. The coffees have a bilingual format and are designed to give parents an opportunity to converse with one another and with the principal in a relaxed setting.

VI. Collaborating with the Community

Barrett has actively sought, through partnerships, community and business support for school programs. For example, a local hotel sponsors our Super Stars program where children are recognized weekly for having excellent social skills and behavior. A local bank provides tutors, classroom presentations on financial issues, and field trips to the bank's vault. An office at the Pentagon collects grocery receipts for computers and sends tutors each week. Teacher volunteers and the principal coordinate the work of our partners.

Conclusion: Towards a Full Partnership

Through a highly collaborative process, at the district and school level as highlighted in these two exemplar practices, Arlington County is working to insure that their families are able to become full partners in the education of their children. These efforts and the impact are well reflected in the words of the district's parent coordinator:

> *Our experience has taught us that in designing school, family, and community partnerships at the local school and district level, it is crucial to acknowledge the experiences and resourcefulness of language minority parents regardless of their education, English language proficiency or length of residence in the United States. Meeting the challenge of fostering a strong home-school partnership requires tremendous effort, but the achievement of our students is paramount. We are heartened by the seeds we can see sprouting in a myriad of arenas. In the success of each new activity, we find the seeds for future initiatives.*

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